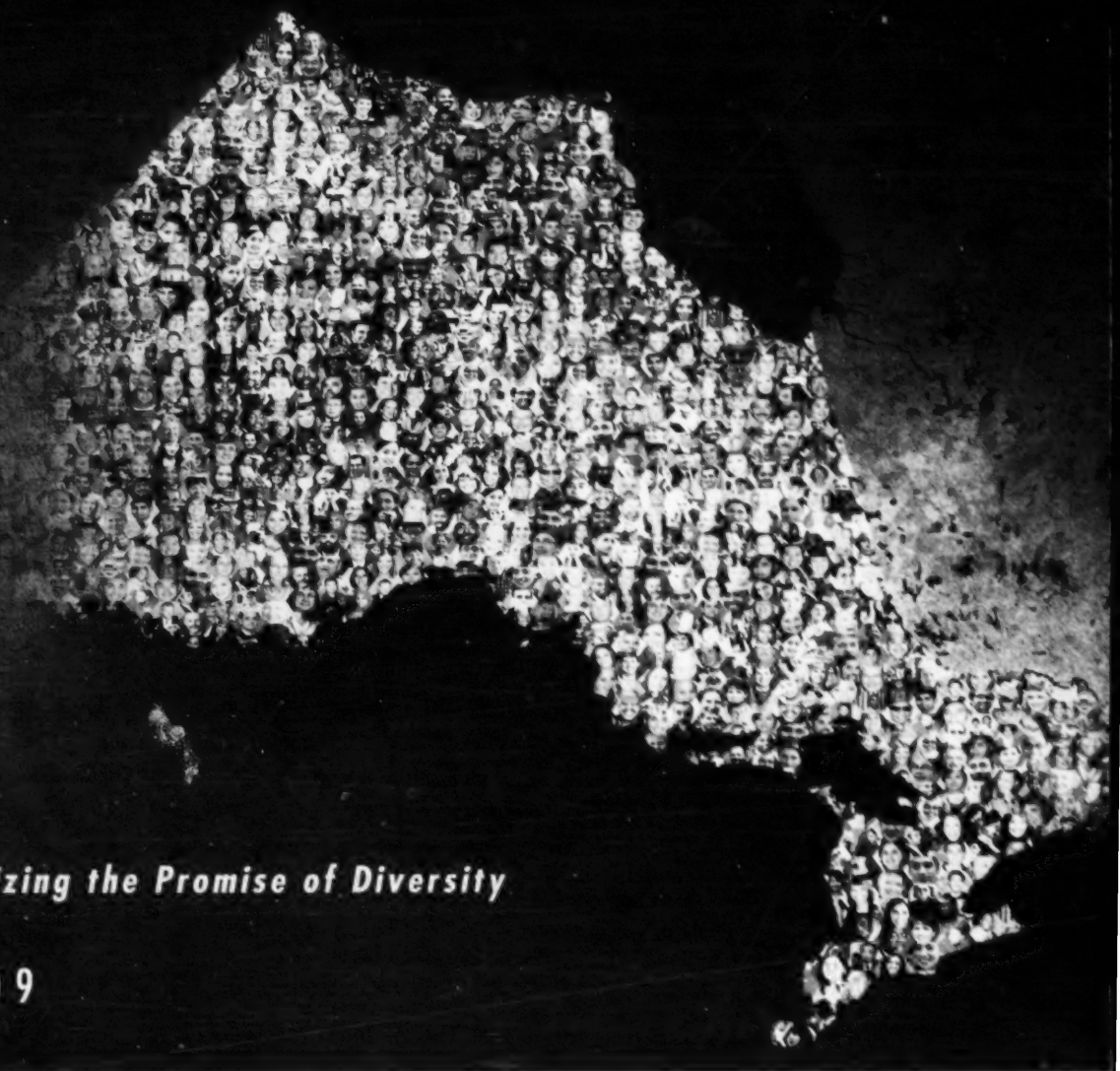
Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION



Realizing the Promise of Diversity

2009

reach every student

Ontario

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Realizing the Promise of Diversity

2009

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant :
Équité et éducation inclusive dans les écoles de l'Ontario : Lignes directrices pour l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de politiques, 2009

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

INTRODUCTION

ON APRIL 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released the document *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (the strategy). That document sets out the following vision for an equitable and inclusive education system:

We envision an equitable and inclusive education system in Ontario in which:

- all students, parents,[1] and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected;
- every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning. (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 10)

This vision and the action plan that accompanies it demonstrate the Ontario government's goal to create the best publicly funded education system in the world, based on three core priorities:

1. High levels of student achievement
2. Reduced gaps in student achievement
3. Increased public confidence in publicly funded education (Ibid., p. 5)

An equitable, inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving these core priorities.

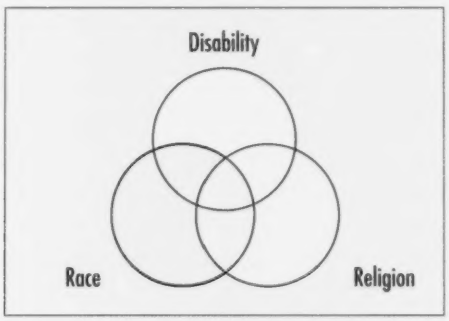
We believe that Ontario's diversity can be its greatest asset. To realize the promise of our diversity, we must respect and value the full range of our differences. Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion, based on an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed within a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens. In reaffirming the values of fairness, equity, and respect as essential principles of our publicly funded education system, the Ontario government's equity and inclusive education strategy will help ensure that all students have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.

1. In this document, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

Equity and inclusive education aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' prospects for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society. Barriers may be related to gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, or other factors. It is now recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers for some students. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

Intersecting Grounds of Discrimination

Two or more of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and other, similar factors, can intersect in one individual or group and create additional biases or barriers. For example, the prohibited grounds of race, religion, and disability can intersect in one individual.



In order to achieve equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools, we must pursue the following three goals, which are rooted in our three core education priorities:

1. **Shared and committed leadership** by the ministry, school boards,[2] and schools will play a critical role in eliminating discrimination through the identification and removal of bias and barriers. Achieving equity is a shared responsibility; establishing an equitable and inclusive education system requires commitment from all education partners.

2. **Equity and inclusive education policies** and practices will support positive learning environments so that all students feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning, and welcome in the environment in which they are learning. Students, teachers, and staff learn and work in an environment that is respectful, supportive, and welcoming to all.

2. In this document, *school boards* or *boards* refers to both school boards and school authorities.

3. **Accountability and transparency** will be demonstrated through the use of clear measures of success (based on established indicators) and through communication to the public of our progress towards achieving equity for all students. Accountability is necessary to maintain and enhance public confidence in the education system.

How to Use These Guidelines

The guidelines provided in this document are designed to help Ontario school boards review and/or develop, implement, and monitor equity and inclusive education policies that will support student achievement, in accordance with the principles and commitments set out in *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 119 (2009) (reproduced in Appendix 6). Each board is expected to develop an equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan that are consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in these documents. As well, when it scrutinizes its other policies and practices during the regular policy review cycle, a board is expected to take steps to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of the learning environment to support student achievement.

The guidelines provided here offer practical strategies and advice, along with examples and templates that boards can use to inform policy review and/or development, implementation, and monitoring. The sections that follow include:

- information about the legislative and policy context and the historical context for the guidelines (pp. 8, 9);
- an overview of ministry expectations with regard to the policy development and implementation process (p. 11);
- a section on policy development setting out a process and framework for developing an equity and inclusive education policy, including expanded descriptions of the eight areas of focus outlined in PPM No. 119 and objectives for each year of implementation (p. 12);
- a section on implementation outlining steps to be taken at the board and school levels (p. 34);
- a section on monitoring and reporting that identifies potential indicators (p. 46);
- a variety of practical and self-reflective tools and templates a board can use to review and/or develop, implement, monitor, and communicate its policy and progress (pp. 32, 36–45, and Appendices 1–5);
- additional resources a board can refer to in policy development and implementation and in monitoring progress (Appendices 6–10).

Where to Get Help

The Inclusive Education Branch and the regional offices of the Ministry of Education can help and support a board in revising, developing, implementing, and monitoring an equity and inclusive education policy. In addition, boards are encouraged to draw upon the expertise and numerous resources that are available in the broader community, including various universities and faculties of education, federations and associations, unions, service organizations, and other community partners.

Legislative and Policy Context

A school board's equity and inclusive education policy is expected to be comprehensive, covering the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It should also adhere to the requirements of existing regulations and policy/program memoranda, including (but not limited to) the following:

- PPM No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools"
- R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, "Operation of Schools – General", s. 27–29, under the heading "Religion in Schools". Sections 27–29 of this regulation under the Education Act outline requirements that were initially provided in PPM No. 112, "Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (December 6, 1990; revoked August 24, 2009).
- PPM No. 127, "The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement" (concerning accommodations, deferrals, and exemptions)
- Ontario Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils"

A board, as part of its equity and inclusive education policy, is to review an existing or develop a new religious accommodation guideline consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code (see the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, 1996), and communicate this guideline to the school community. It is recognized that some existing board policies have also responded to related issues or factors that are not covered in the Code but that could act as systemic barriers to student learning. These factors may be included in the board's equity and inclusive education policy.

For Roman Catholic and French-language boards, development and implementation of equity and inclusive education policies will take place within the context of the denominational rights of Roman Catholic schools as set out in section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Education Act, and the language rights of French-language rights-holders as set out in section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Education Act. Boards should refer to *Ontario's Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-language Education.*[3]

3. Boards should also refer to PPM No. 148, "Policies Governing Admission to French-Language Schools in Ontario", April 22, 2009; and *L'admission, l'accueil et l'accompagnement des élèves dans les écoles de langue française de l'Ontario – Énoncé de politique et directives, 2009.*

All boards should also consult *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007* and the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*.

The principles of equity and inclusion have guided special education policy since Bill 82 (1980) required the inclusion of all children, independent of their abilities or disabilities, in Ontario's publicly funded education system. Ontario Regulation 181/98 further requires school boards to consider placing exceptional students into regular classes before considering placement in a special education class. In cases where students are placed in special education classes, reasons for doing so must be given. O. Reg. 181/98 also introduced the Individual Education Plan (IEP), which has since become the centrepiece for providing special education programs and services to exceptional students. The IEP is an equity tool: it is designed to ensure that appropriate educational accommodations or modifications are provided to students in order that they may attend school, achieve to their full potential, and have every opportunity to access the curriculum and participate along with all other students in the life of the school.

Boards must follow the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), as applicable. The former requires boards to prepare annual accessibility plans addressing a broad range of disability issues.

Boards and schools must continue to uphold the standards set out in the provincial Code of Conduct in which respect for all is the overarching principle.

Historical Context

The following three policy/program memoranda (PPMs) of the ministry have, in recent years, served to support equity, human rights, and social justice issues:

- PPM No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (January 12, 1989), which pertains to the manner and content of opening and closing exercises
- PPM No. 112, "Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (December 6, 1990; revoked August 24, 2009),[4] which pertained to the teaching of religion in the public elementary and secondary schools. It stated that education designed to teach about religion and moral values is permitted but indoctrination in a particular religious faith is not.
- Former PPM No. 119, "Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity" (July 13, 1993; replaced June 24, 2009), which directed school boards to develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity.

4. As stated on page 8, the policy outlined in PPM No. 112 was subsequently incorporated into regulation (R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 27–29, "Religion in Schools").

When the former PPM No.119 was issued in 1993, it noted that a Eurocentric perspective in education had the effect of limiting the contributions of people from a variety of different backgrounds and excluding the experiences, values, and viewpoints of members of racial and ethnocultural communities, including Aboriginal communities. The PPM required antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies in recognition of the fact that inequities of power and privilege limited opportunities for members of Aboriginal and other racial and ethnocultural groups to fulfil their potential and to maximize their contribution to society. The policy outlined in the PPM reflected a commitment to eliminating racism in schools and in society at large by changing both individual behaviour and institutional policies and practices.

Until the present time, these three memoranda provided direction to school boards on how to help identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and systemic barriers so that all students would learn to respect diversity and develop confidence in their cultural and racial identities.

The ministry has made significant progress in recent years in addressing barriers and improving student achievement. A comprehensive Kindergarten to Grade 12 policy for English language learners is now in place (*English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007*), as is a provincial Aboriginal education strategy (*Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*). The ministry has also maintained its focus on providing current information to the field about evidence-based strategies for the instruction of students with special education needs (as reflected, for example, in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005*).

The ministry remains firmly committed to the elimination of racism and of discrimination on the basis of disability. Although much good work has been done, and continues to be done, the presence of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers remains a concern. The 2007/2008 Annual Report of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (p. 48) shows that complaints based on race and disability outnumber complaints based on any other prohibited grounds. As noted in the strategy document (p. 7), the Supreme Court of Canada in 2005 acknowledged that racial prejudice against visible minorities is so notorious and indisputable that its existence needs to be treated as a social fact. In addition, researchers have found that racial minority students and their parents tend to experience racism as a "collective attribute that is expressed overtly and indirectly" and not strictly as "isolated acts of overt individual prejudice" (Berger, n.d., p. 98). Educators, administrators, and school staff must maintain their focus on racism and disability to address these issues.

We need to work collectively to realize our vision of an equitable and inclusive education system, and to eliminate all types of systemic barriers from Ontario's schools and society. The new equity and inclusive education strategy aims to close

student achievement gaps by identifying and eliminating any biases, barriers, and power dynamics that may limit students' prospects for learning, growing, and contributing fully to society.

The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the New Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

The strategy and the new PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009), recognize all the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and also acknowledge societal issues such as sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and socio-economic status. Furthermore, the strategy recognizes that factors such as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, gender, gender identity, and class often intersect to create additional barriers for some students. While racism continues to be a major focus, the strategy recognizes that Ontario's publicly funded schools must increase their efforts to develop an approach that will respond to the full range of needs within the education community. Effective implementation is essential and is therefore a key component of this strategy.

Overview of Policy Development and Implementation

The ministry expects a board to have an equity and inclusive education policy in place by the beginning of the school year 2010–11 (September 2010). The strategy, PPM No. 119, and the guidelines refer to and describe the eight areas of focus to be addressed in the equity and inclusive education policy while taking account of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other factors. In the policy development and implementation processes, a board has the flexibility to determine the approach that will best suit its local circumstances. For example, a board may consider how to accommodate the prohibited grounds of the Code within each area of focus or, alternatively, how to address each area of focus in light of the prohibited grounds under the Code.

Recognizing that achieving improvement across Ontario's school boards takes time, the ministry has provided for policy development and implementation to be phased in, initially over a four-year period. The ministry also recognizes that boards are at different stages with regard to equity and inclusive education policies. The strategy seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement, with progress demonstrated and communicated annually. Boards are expected to use the cyclical review process to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of their operations and learning environments in order to enhance support for student achievement and help close achievement gaps.

POLICY **DEVELOPMENT**

BOARDS WILL PROVIDE LEADERSHIP to schools by revising or developing and issuing a board equity and inclusive education policy and guideline(s) or procedure(s) to support, implement, and align with the strategy and PPM No. 119.

In revising or developing its policy, a board:

- has the flexibility to take into account local needs and circumstances such as geographical considerations, demographics, cultural needs, and the availability of board and community support and resources;
- is expected to consult widely with students, parents, principals, teachers and other staff, and school councils; with its Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee, Diversity Committee, and other appropriate committees; and with federations and unions, service organizations, and other community partners, in order to reflect the diversity of the broader educational community;
- must adhere to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Education Act and regulations made under the act, and must respect all applicable collective agreements;
- should consult with its legal counsel and freedom-of-information coordinators to ensure that it is fulfilling all its legal responsibilities.

Guiding Principles

In revising or developing its policy, a board must adhere to the guiding principles listed in the following box:

Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

Equity and inclusive education:

- is a foundation of excellence;
  In a diverse society, equity is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and high standards of student achievement.
- meets individual needs;
  Equity does not mean treating all students in the same way but, rather, responding to the individual needs of each student and providing the conditions and interventions needed to help him or her succeed.
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
  All students are supported equitably through the identification and removal of discriminatory barriers that limit their ability to achieve to their full potential.
- promotes a sense of belonging;
  Equity and inclusive education contribute to every student's sense of well-being.
- involves the broad community;
  Effective and meaningful school–community partnerships are an essential component of an equitable and inclusive education system.
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;
  Sound research and analysis of successful policies and practices form the basis for the development and sharing of resources.
- is demonstrated throughout the system.
  The ministry, school boards, and schools will incorporate principles of equity and inclusive education throughout their policies, programs, and practices.

Areas of Focus

The guidelines, strategy, and PPM No. 119 identify the following areas of focus:

1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices
2. Shared and committed leadership
3. School–community relationships
4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices
5. Religious accommodation

6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment
7. Professional learning
8. Accountability and transparency

All eight areas of focus are to be represented in a board's equity and inclusive education policy. Some boards will be able to build upon the good work they have already done; they may incorporate existing equity and/or antiracism/ethnocultural policy or policies into their equity and inclusive education policy. The equity and inclusive education policy is to include a statement articulating the board's vision and commitment to the strategy. A mission statement for each of the eight areas of focus should also be provided. Each board may use its own approved process and format for board policy development.

The diagram "Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy: Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus" illustrates the eight areas of focus and their relationship to the Ontario Human Rights Code and the guiding principles of the equity and inclusive education strategy.

Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy
Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus
Prohibited grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and other factors
8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY
1. BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES, AND PRACTICES
7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
Equity and inclusive education:
• is a foundation of excellence
• meets individual needs
• identifies and eliminates barriers
• promotes a sense of belonging
• involves the broad community
• builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives
• is demonstrated throughout the system
2. SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP
6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT
3. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS
5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION
4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
Prohibited grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and other factors

6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment
7. Professional learning
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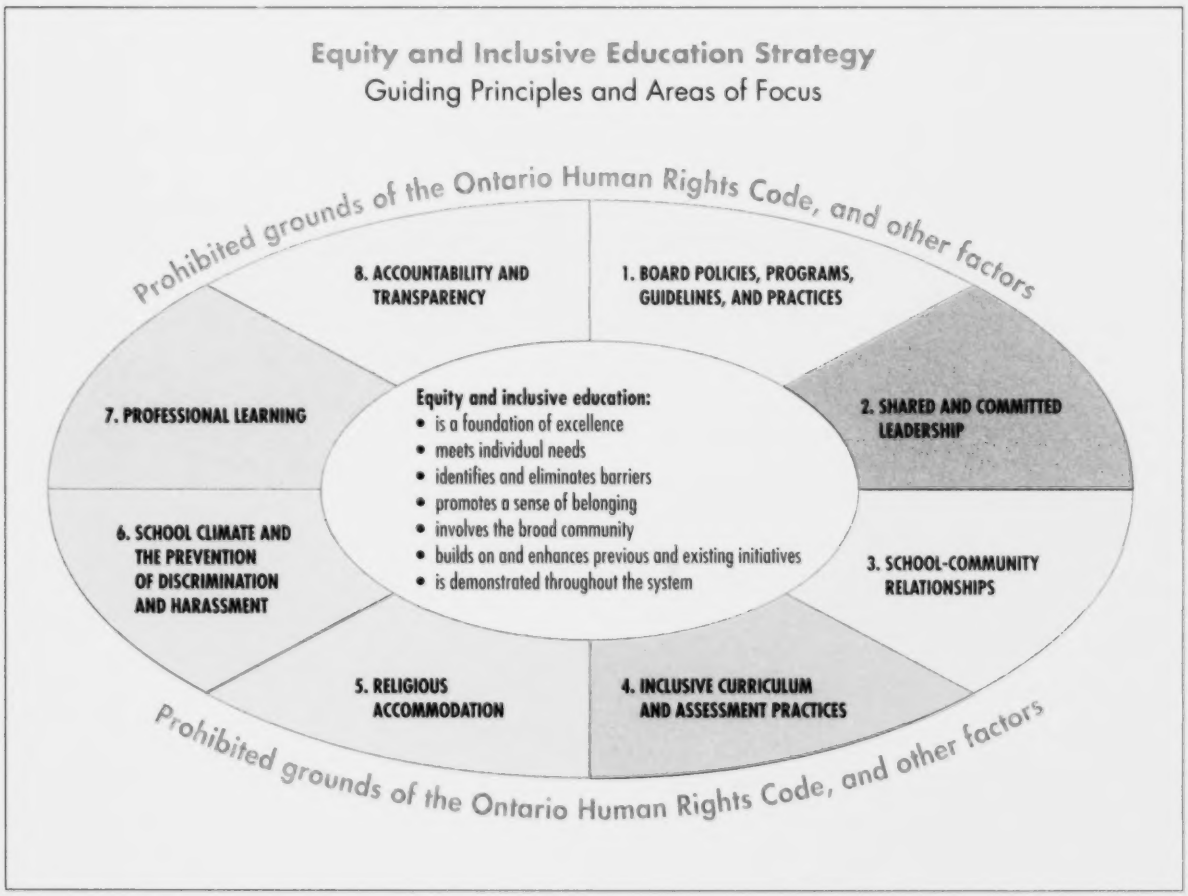
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Prohibited grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and other factors

This document includes the following tools to assist boards:

- Appendix 1, "Sample Policies", assists by providing wording that boards may find useful in drafting their own policies. The wording may be modified to suit the mission and structure of each board.
- Appendix 2, "Getting Started", provides guidance to boards that are beginning the policy development and implementation process.
- The "Policy Development Resource Tool for School Boards" (p. 32) is a multi-purpose resource that can be used to assist in monitoring implementation of the policy and/or the progress of the board's cyclical review process.

Action Items by Area of Focus

1 Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2008–2009	• review existing equity and inclusive education policies and/or begin to develop or extend such policies;
2009–2010	• develop or revise policies on equity and inclusive education for implementation by September 2010;
2010–2011	• implement equity and inclusive education policies; • embed equity and inclusive education principles in board and school improvement plans;
2011–2012	• implement positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning.

Schools will:

2009–2010	• develop and implement strategies to engage students, parents, and the broader community actively in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education;
2011–2012	• implement board equity and inclusive education policies, programs, and action plans that reflect the needs of their diverse school communities.

This area of focus establishes the framework for policy development and implementation in all the other areas of focus.

Equity and inclusive education policy

A school board is expected to have an equity and inclusive education policy in place by September 2010. All other board policies, programs, procedures, and practices are

to be aligned with this policy and with the requirements as set out in PPM No. 119 and the strategy.

Policy Review

In the course of its policy review cycle, a board is expected to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all its policies and practices and to integrate an equity and inclusive education focus into its way of doing business and all operations of its schools, including instructional practices. This will support the core priorities of high levels of student achievement and reduced gaps in student achievement.

All the board's policies, guidelines, programs, practices, and services should reflect the diverse viewpoints, needs, and aspirations of the broader community. Discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to equity and inclusive education should be identified and addressed so that students can see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, culture, and teaching, administrative, and support staff of the school.

Employment Practices

Equitable employment practices support the fair treatment of all working people in Ontario. A board should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. Boards may, for example, choose to undertake employment system reviews and work on broadening recruitment pools. Board and school staff should reflect the diversity within the community and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse groups within the board's jurisdiction. Such measures bring tangible benefits. Organizations are strengthened when employers can draw upon a broad range of talents, skills, and perspectives: in this regard, schools have a pivotal role in developing the workforce and citizens of tomorrow. Implementing equitable employment practices promotes a positive, welcoming work and learning environment. And school–community relations improve when students, parents, and community members see themselves represented in their educational institutions.

The Rainbow District School Board recognizes the valuable insights and cultural history that First Nations teachers bring into a school environment. The board partnered with the local First Nations community bands to recruit Ojibwe teachers by extending its outreach and communications efforts through advertising, the distribution of a brochure, and attendance at university employment fairs. This resulted in the hiring of six Ojibwe teachers.

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2 Shared and committed leadership

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2008–2009
- identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources;

2011–2012
- provide opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.

The principle of shared and committed leadership recognizes that all partners in education – including community partners, parents, and students – are responsible for preparing students to live in a diverse society. However, bringing change to instructional practices and the learning culture requires strong, focused leadership from, in particular, school board trustees, directors of education, superintendents, principals, and teachers. Boards and schools are expected to provide leadership that is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities and committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning.

School leadership

Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School leaders must have a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement within a culture of high expectations. This culture is guided by the fundamental principle that every child can learn and by a commitment to reach every student.

Collaborative leadership

Effective board and school leaders, as reflected in the principles of the ministry's Ontario leadership strategy, promote the development of collaborative environments in which participants share a commitment to equity and inclusive education practices. This approach supports the active engagement of students, parents, federations and unions, universities and colleges, service organizations, and other community partners. Leaders in the educational system must share responsibility for decision making with these groups.

Student leadership

The important role that student leaders play in influencing their peers and the school culture must also be acknowledged, and their efforts encouraged. Where students are active participants and fully engaged in their education, student achievement improves.

Making connections

To demonstrate shared and committed leadership and in support of the strategy, a board is expected to identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

The York Catholic District School Board asks for one staff member at each school to volunteer as an equity representative. This person works with the principal, other staff, and the school community to address equity issues and coordinate activities to mark important cultural days or events, including Black History Month, Stand Up Against Poverty Day, and World HIV/AIDS Day.

Student Voice is about Ontario's students taking control of their learning by becoming engaged. It's about connecting what's happening in the classroom to real-life experience out of school and giving students ways to help achieve their goals. SPEAKUP projects are helping students and student councils get more engaged in learning and their school community.

3 School–community relationships

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2009–2010

- review existing community partnerships to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives.

Schools will:

2009–2010

- implement strategies to review existing community partnerships so that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- work towards representation of diverse groups on school committees.

Building capacity

Schools and boards need to build their capacity to serve increasingly diverse communities. A board can help to ensure that all perspectives are represented by encouraging community involvement and participation in the development, implementation, and monitoring of school board policies and programs. Such an approach fosters school–community relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect.

A board should continue to work with educators, support staff, employers, the community, parents, and students to build on success and increase system capacity. It should, for example, continue to develop partnerships between schools and employers to provide more cooperative education placements and other forms of experiential learning and program pathways for students. The whole school community, in keeping with its collaborative culture, has a collective responsibility to find ways to keep all members of the community working together towards improved educational outcomes and successful participation in society for all students.

Partnerships and outreach

School boards should maintain existing relationships and partnerships that support constructive and open dialogue with parents, community groups, and partners. They should also analyse their current outreach efforts so that all community groups have access to and can participate in school–community partnerships. Expanded outreach is particularly important to the development and implementation of an equity and inclusive education policy, where the support of the entire, diverse school community is essential.

The School and Community Engaged Education Project, administered by the York Centre for Education and Community, is a three-year partnership between the York University Faculty of Education and the Toronto District School Board. It is designed to improve the participation and performance of students by focusing on their particular needs, concerns, interests, and aspirations. Launched in the fall of 2008, the project is carried out in several schools and includes research to identify and assess current educational activities, professional development for teachers, mentoring and achievement counselling for students, and measures designed to engage parents and community members.

To demonstrate shared and committed leadership and in support of the strategy, a board is expected to identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

The York Catholic District School Board asks for one staff member at each school to volunteer as an equity representative. This person works with the principal, other staff, and the school community to address equity issues and coordinate activities to mark important cultural days or events, including Black History Month, Stand Up Against Poverty Day, and World HIV/AIDS Day.

Student Voice is about Ontario's students taking control of their learning by becoming engaged. It's about connecting what's happening in the classroom to real-life experience out of school and giving students ways to help achieve their goals. SPEAKUP projects are helping students and student councils get more engaged in learning and their school community.

School–community relationships

2009–2010

- review existing community partnerships to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives.

2009–2010

- implement strategies to review existing community partnerships so that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;
- work towards representation of diverse groups on school committees.

Building capacity

Schools and boards need to build their capacity to serve increasingly diverse communities. A board can help to ensure that all perspectives are represented by encouraging community involvement and participation in the development, implementation, and monitoring of school board policies and programs. Such an approach fosters school–community relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect.

A board should continue to work with educators, support staff, employers, the community, parents, and students to build on success and increase system capacity. It should, for example, continue to develop partnerships between schools and employers to provide more cooperative education placements and other forms of experiential learning and program pathways for students. The whole school community, in keeping with its collaborative culture, has a collective responsibility to find ways to keep all members of the community working together towards improved educational outcomes and successful participation in society for all students.

School boards should maintain existing relationships and partnerships that support constructive and open dialogue with parents, community groups, and partners. They should also analyse their current outreach efforts so that all community groups have access to and can participate in school–community partnerships. Expanded outreach is particularly important to the development and implementation of an equity and inclusive education policy, where the support of the entire, diverse school community is essential.

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Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board provides Grade 7 and 8 students with an opportunity to experience Aboriginal arts through story telling, music, visual arts, interpretive movement, and drama. The program concludes with a symposium where students share stories, art, and dance created during the program. Aboriginal artists and community elders participate in the development and delivery of the program.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the Kababayan Community Centre, runs an after-school program for Grade 8, 9, and 10 students who have recently arrived from the Philippines. The program is run from October to June every two weeks in schools with high Filipino student populations. Students are mentored on various topics, including adjusting to life in Canada and leadership skills, and are able to participate in social activities such as group skating, summer camp, and field trips.

Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

Boards will:

2009–2010 • review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated;

2010–2011 • support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.

Schools will:

2010–2011 • review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.

Curriculum policy

The ministry's curriculum policy supports respect for and acceptance of diversity in Ontario's schools. Through the curriculum review process, curriculum is continually revised to maintain and increase its relevance to the changing needs and lives of

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Schools will:

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- review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.

Curriculum policy

The ministry's curriculum policy supports respect for and acceptance of diversity in Ontario's schools. Through the curriculum review process, curriculum is continually revised to maintain and increase its relevance to the changing needs and lives of

students. Recent revisions include the addition of sections on antidiscrimination education and Aboriginal perspectives and how they relate to the particular subject or discipline.

Learning opportunities and resources

Schools are expected to give students and staff authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Lessons, projects, and related resources should allow students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum (e.g., providing information about women's contributions to science and technology, about Black inventors, about Aboriginal beliefs and practices related to the environment; using texts written by gay/lesbian authors). Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning, and welcomed in the environment in which they are learning.

Instructional practices

Schools are expected to support effective instructional practices that reflect the diverse needs and pathways of all students. Currently, there are excellent examples of practices that consider the diverse needs of individual learners. Differentiated instruction takes into account the backgrounds and experiences of students in order to provide content that is relevant to them and approaches that are suited to their individual interests, aptitudes, and learning needs.

Closing the achievement gap

According to *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education*, "advanced literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills are the keys to successful lives for students" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 6). Ontario's literacy and numeracy strategy supports *all* students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, in attaining the highest possible achievement in both literacy and numeracy, through the implementation of *evidence-based instructional and assessment practices across all subjects*. Adopting such practices, teachers across Ontario help close the achievement gap by giving all students the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Student Success strategy promotes programs at the secondary level that are designed to engage students by meeting their diverse needs and interests. By helping more students succeed, these programs contribute to closing the achievement gap. For example, the Specialist High Skills Major enables students to gain sector-specific skills and knowledge in the context of engaging, career-related learning environments, and helps them focus on graduation and on pursuing their postsecondary goals. Students who are experiencing success in programs that recognize their strengths and interests remain active, engaged learners.

Assessment and evaluation

Schools need to review their assessment and evaluation practices to identify and address any discriminatory biases that prevent students from fulfilling their learning potential. In order to support valid and reliable assessment and evaluation, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that:

- address both what students learn and how well they learn;
- are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement-level descriptions given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for each discipline;
- are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of the students;
- are fair to all students;
- accommodate the needs of students with special education needs, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plan;
- accommodate the needs of students who are learning the language of instruction;
- ensure that each student is given clear directions for improvement;
- promote students' ability to assess their own learning and to set specific goals;
- include the use of samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement;
- are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the course and at other appropriate points throughout the course.

Communication

A board is expected to inform parents and students about the board's assessment and evaluation policies and practices. Information about the learning expectations and the student's academic progress should be communicated to the student and parents on an ongoing basis. Parents should feel that their active participation in assessment and placement decisions is welcomed, and the student should have equitable access to available program options. A board is expected to make efforts to assist parents who do not understand the language of the board.

The Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières offers a program to Grade 6 students and their teachers in which Métis elders host dynamic workshops on Métis culture, knowledge, and perspectives. The program seeks to strengthen students' sense of identity and belonging, promote the development of literacy skills, and provide resource enrichment in reading and social studies. It is supported by community partnerships with Métis organizations.

The ministry document English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 *(2007) sets out policies and procedures for the development and implementation of programs and supports for English language learners in English elementary and secondary schools.*

The Aboriginal Education Office's "Teachers' Toolkit" is a resource that provides various teaching strategies to infuse Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum for Grades 1 to 12. It includes background information for each topic, references to resources, and ways to engage communities and parents.

In 2009, Grade 5 students at the Peel District School Board's Corsair Public School learned about ableism through song writing, drama, visual art, and social studies. The class wrote a song with musician Greg Lawless called "We're All Able." The lyrics are as follows:

We're all able. We're all able.
To think, to feel, to love.
We're all able.

In my mind, I have a dream.
That we're all playing on the same team.
We all deserve, deserve a try.
And this my friend, you can't deny.

We should be loved for who we are.
'Cuz deep inside we're all a star.
And we all have the ability.
To be the best that we can be.

I will pick you up.
When you fall down.
I will turn your frown.
Right upside down.

Chorus

So, help me live my destiny.
And help me find the best in me.
To show how great that I can be.
From east to west, from you to me.

(continued)

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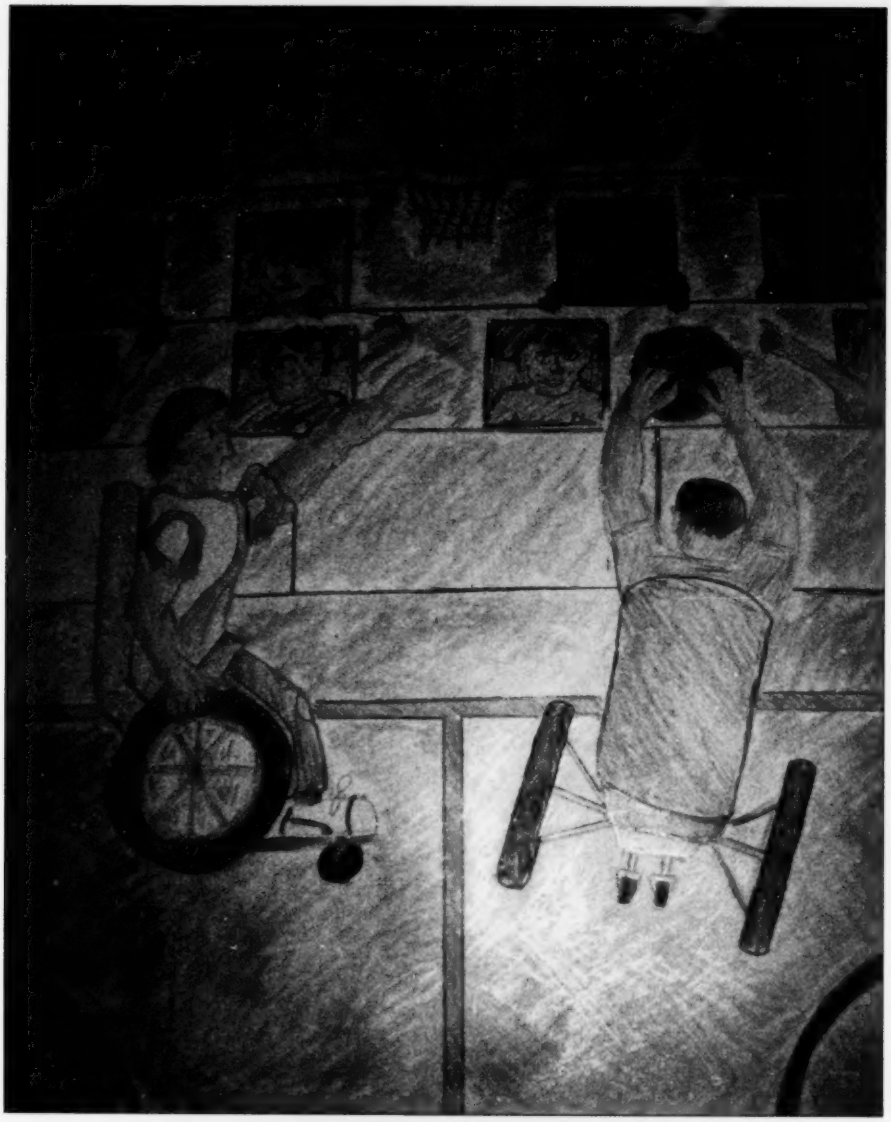
(continued)

Two boys in the class, Davyd and Arjun, also drew a picture of two men playing wheelchair basketball, with a caption that reads, "Wheelchair basketball is based on the actual game: basketball. The athlete's wheelchair is faster and safer. And the game is for all athletes. So if things don't work out one way, try it another way!"



5 Religious accommodation

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2009–2010 • have religious accommodation guidelines in place, and communicate these guidelines to the school community.

Board policy

Religious accommodation provisions are designed to promote a respectful learning environment for all. Accordingly, a board is expected to take appropriate steps to provide religious accommodation for students and employees. As part of its equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan, a board is expected to include a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009), and the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Code prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed and imposes a duty to accommodate (see Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, 1996). Boards should also adhere to the requirements set out in PPM No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", and R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 27–29, "Religion in Schools".

Effective practice

A school board is expected to provide religious accommodation for students and employees who want to practise a faith. The Ontario Human Rights Commission interprets "creed" broadly as "religious creed" or "religion" and defines it as "a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship" (OHRC, 1996, p. 4). The commission limits the definition of creed, excluding "secular, moral or ethical beliefs or political convictions" and religions that "incite hatred or violence against other individuals or groups" or that "contravene international human rights standards or criminal law" (p. 5). Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code. Therefore, a board has to facilitate the practice of religious observances and allow its employees and students freedom to practise their religion while at school.

Examples of religious accommodation include the following: granting a leave for a staff member for a religious observance (e.g., Diwali, Eid, Yom Kippur); modifying a student's responsibilities in an examination schedule or on a field trip; and

permitting religious attire such as a turban, the hijab, or a ceremonial kirpan. To assist a board in reviewing and/or developing a religious accommodation guideline, a sample template has been included for reference (see Appendix 4, "Sample Template: Religious Accommodation Guideline"). A number of boards have taken steps to provide religious accommodation. Several examples are included in the boxes below.

The Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario believes that recognition of diverse Canadian traditions encourages the creation of a dynamic and inclusive school community. Recognition of and respect for the diverse religions and cultures within the board through an interfaith calendar support the board and schools in making decisions on religious accommodation and increase the participation of students and parents in school activities.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board has taken steps to accept and respect students with different religious views. For example, this includes allowances for Muslim secondary students to utilize school chapels for prayer and to wear head coverings as part of their school uniform. As well, the secondary school curriculum in the area of health, physical, and outdoor education may be modified for students who are fasting during holy days. These practices are in keeping with Catholic Gospel Values and the board's Equity Policy.

6 School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

Boards will:

2009–2010

- implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives;
- put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will also enable the board to respond in a timely manner.

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- put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will also enable the board to respond in a timely manner.

School climate

School climate is defined as the sum total of all of the personal relationships within the school. Every person within the school community is entitled to experience a positive school climate, free from discrimination and harassment. The provincial Code of Conduct affirms this right, which applies to all students, parents, teachers, and staff members. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate by protecting and respecting the rights of others. When relationships founded in mutual respect are modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm.

Board policy

Board policies are expected to foster positive school climates that are free from racism and discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A positive and inclusive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. A Safe Schools Action Team report notes that "among the many factors that influence the quality of student learning and achievement, a safe and supportive environment for learning and working is one of the most important" (Safe Schools Action Team, 2008, p. 1). The principles of equity and inclusive education support positive student behaviour. These principles must also be applied in progressive discipline, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other factors in individual cases. Furthermore, for students with special education needs, all interventions, consequences, and supports must take into account requirements outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Monitoring of school climate

Regular monitoring of school climate is essential. Monitoring through school climate surveys, as outlined in PPM No. 144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention", can help identify inappropriate behaviours, issues, or barriers – overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional – that should be addressed. A board is expected to incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education into its school climate surveys. A board is also expected to put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will also enable the board to respond in a timely manner.

Effective school practice

A variety of school-led activities, teams, or clubs, such as Gay/Straight Alliances or Students and Teachers Against Racism, promote and encourage the understanding and development of healthy relationships. Schools should support students who wish to engage in such activities and groups. Co-curricular activities that offer students opportunities to achieve success outside the classroom can contribute to their engagement in learning and success inside the classroom.

The Toronto District School Board offers the Triangle Program to students in Grades 9 to 12. The Triangle Program is Canada's only high school program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and students who may be victims of homophobia. The board also offers the Human Sexuality Program, delivered through the board's social-work department, which provides anti-homophobia workshops for schools and students. It also offers professional development to enable teachers, staff, and community partners to address issues and incidents of homophobia and heterosexism.

7 Professional learning

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2010–2011
- support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;

2011–2012
- provide opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.

Schools will:

2010–2011
- review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.

Building capacity

Boards need to build capacity among staff for understanding and addressing issues that pertain to equity, diversity, and inclusive education, through collaborative learning communities and professional learning opportunities at all levels. Doing so will help to create an inclusive, respectful, fair, and discrimination-free school system by changing individual and collective behaviour and organizational and institutional practices to support student achievement and help close achievement gaps.

Professional learning activities

Professional learning activities must be ongoing and based on evidence of positive results. A board is expected to provide opportunities for teachers, including guidance counsellors, and support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and to provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. A board is also expected to provide sensitivity training in the areas of gender and sexual orientation, as well as training in effective early intervention and prevention strategies and practices to deal with incidents related to racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Building awareness

An improved awareness of the negative impact on students' lives of discriminatory behaviour and attitudes, including racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and homophobia, can help education leaders, trustees, and staff change individual behaviour and institutional practices to eliminate systemic barriers. A board is encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within its own organization, other boards, and community agencies and groups. Effective, systemic change can only be achieved by the collective action of all those involved in the school system.

The Greater Essex County District School Board has developed a comprehensive diversity training program called "Diversity Matters" as part of its New Teacher Induction Program. This mandatory one-day workshop consists of four modules designed to help teachers meaningfully address the changing needs of Ontario's increasingly diverse classrooms.

The Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation conducts half- or full-day workshops on gender-based violence and homophobia. The workshop, called "From PAIN to PRIDE", provides teachers with definitions, resources, and strategies to help them address equity issues faced by their students. Teachers learn about the different components of gender-based violence and the negative impact of having only traditional gender identities accepted and reinforced in schools and at home. In addition, the workshop provides a four-stage approach to handling harassment in school hallways that includes stopping the harassment, identifying the issue, broadening the response, and asking for change in future behaviour.

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Rationale

Boards need to build capacity among staff for understanding and addressing issues that pertain to equity, diversity, and inclusive education, through collaborative learning communities and professional learning opportunities at all levels. Doing so will help to create an inclusive, respectful, fair, and discrimination-free school system by changing individual and collective behaviour and organizational and institutional practices to support student achievement and help close achievement gaps.

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8 Accountability and transparency

ACTION ITEMS

Boards will:

2008–2009
- report on progress in the Director of Education's annual report;

2010–2011
- provide information about equity and inclusive education policies, procedures, and practices to students, administrators, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers, and make efforts to assist parents who do not understand the language of the board;

2011–2012
- establish processes that include performance indicators to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures.

Schools will:

2009–2010
- report progress annually to the school board;

2010–2011
- develop school improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy;

2011–2012
- review and establish self-assessment processes to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.

Supporting student achievement

The whole school community has a collective responsibility to foster student achievement and success. School leaders facilitate this process by listening to and acting upon community feedback and by engaging others to work in the best interests of all students.

School improvement planning

Board and school leaders and staff teams should collaborate in a school improvement process that uses comprehensive, valid, and reliable data to help identify the root causes of barriers to student achievement, to sharpen awareness of all of the different grounds of discrimination that exist, to encourage courageous conversations about racism and equity issues, and to find ways to address the identified barriers.

Monitoring progress

A school board must assess and monitor its progress in reviewing its policies, programs, guidelines, and practices and in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy. Board and school improvement plans, within the context of the board's multi-year plan, are to be developed using an equity and inclusive education focus.

Accountability

A board must have appropriate mechanisms in place to help ensure accountability and transparency in reporting progress to the ministry and the community. The Director of Education's annual report must inform the ministry about the board's progress in implementing its equity and inclusive education policy. It is expected that a board will post its equity and inclusive education policy on its website.

The annual report should also outline progress, arising from the cyclical review of board policies and practices, towards embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board operations. The report should give details of the steps taken to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps, and the results obtained.

The Halton District School Board requires every school to have a Diversity Contact Teacher and a Student Safety and Well-being Team. The team provides workshops to assist the school in setting its diversity/equity goals for the year. Schools are encouraged to use School Effectiveness Survey data in the "I feel safe, I feel I belong" domains. To help monitor and determine progress, schools are encouraged to collect "before and after" data on such topics as improved student achievement, reduced rates of absenteeism, and increased student participation in the school.

Communication

Boards must also inform the community about these efforts and their outcome. Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of the board's goals and progress is essential to increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools.

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A board must have appropriate mechanisms in place to help ensure accountability and transparency in reporting progress to the ministry and the community. The Director of Education's annual report must inform the ministry about the board's progress in implementing its equity and inclusive education policy. It is expected that a board will post its equity and inclusive education policy on its website.

The annual report should also outline progress, arising from the cyclical review of board policies and practices, towards embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board operations. The report should give details of the steps taken to improve student achievement and reduce achievement gaps, and the results obtained.

The Halton District School Board requires every school to have a Diversity Contact Teacher and a Student Safety and Well-being Team. The team provides workshops to assist the school in setting its diversity/equity goals for the year. Schools are encouraged to use School Effectiveness Survey data in the "I feel safe, I feel I belong" domains. To help monitor and determine progress, schools are encouraged to collect "before and after" data on such topics as improved student achievement, reduced rates of absenteeism, and increased student participation in the school.

Communication

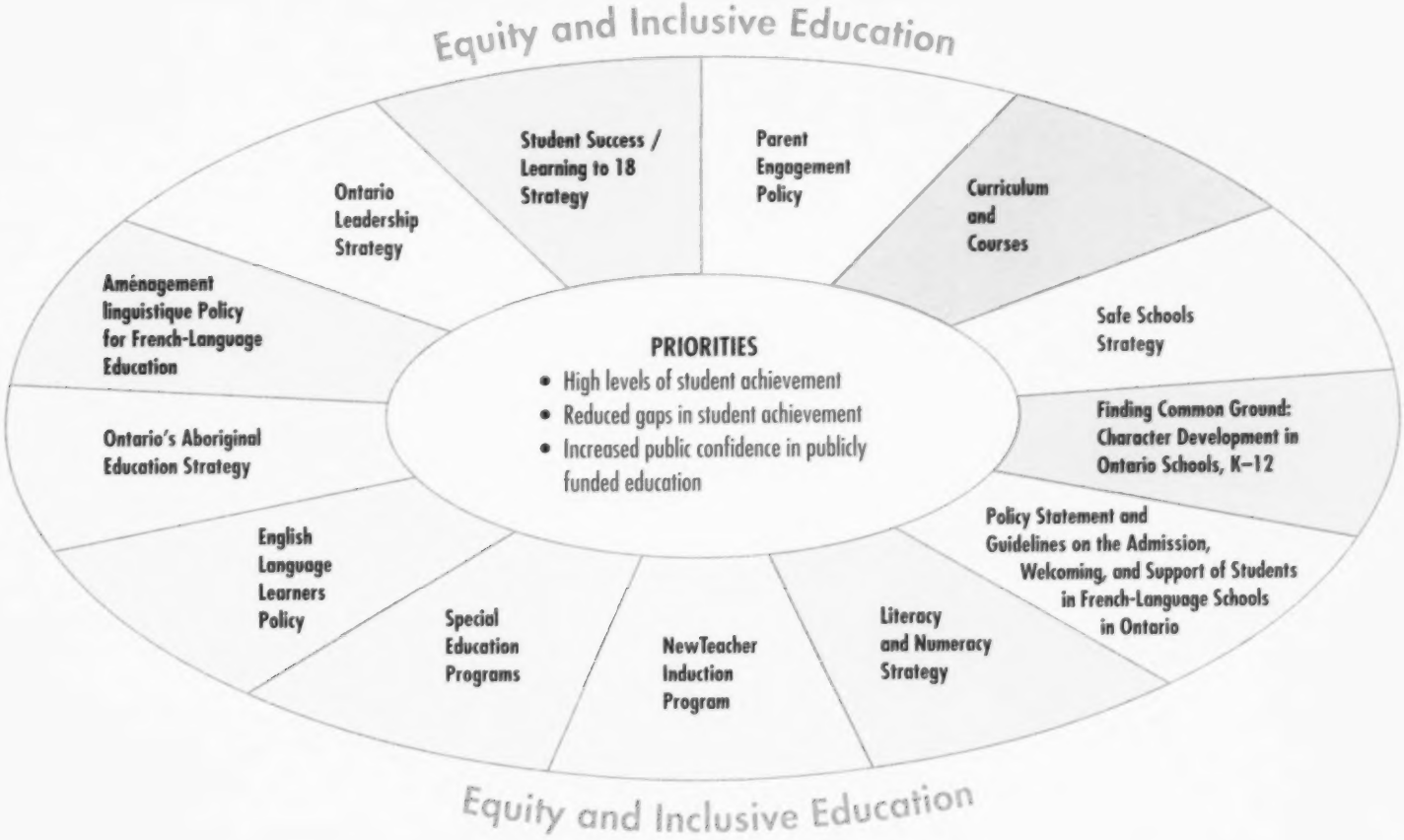
Boards must also inform the community about these efforts and their outcome. Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of the board's goals and progress is essential to increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools.

Policy Development Resource Tool for School Boards

Questions	Yes	No	In process
1. Does the policy provide a statement of commitment to the principles of Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy, PPM No. 119, the guidelines for policy development and implementation, and the Ontario Human Rights Code?			
2. Does the policy clearly address all prohibited grounds of discrimination and harassment described in the Ontario Human Rights Code?			
3. Does the policy clearly address all eight areas of focus described in PPM No. 119?			
4. Have the diverse communities been consulted in the development and/or review of the policy?			
5. Are there processes in place to ensure that the community is aware of the policy?			
6. Does the policy contain a guideline on religious accommodation?			

Key Connections to Ministry Programs and Initiatives

This diagram illustrates that equity and inclusive education principles are connected and relevant to other ministry programs and initiatives in achieving the ministry's three core priorities.


Equity and Inclusive Education
Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy
Parent Engagement Policy
Curriculum and Courses
Safe Schools Strategy
Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K–12
Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming, and Support of Students in French-Language Schools in Ontario
Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NewTeacher Induction Program
Special Education Programs
English Language Learners Policy
Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy
Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-Language Education
Ontario Leadership Strategy
PRIORITIES
• High levels of student achievement
• Reduced gaps in student achievement
• Increased public confidence in publicly funded education
Equity and Inclusive Education

IMPLEMENTATION

Equity and inclusive education policy

The ministry expects each board, by the beginning of the 2010–11 school year (September 2010), to have in place an equity and inclusive education policy that addresses the eight areas of focus, a guideline on religious accommodation, and an implementation plan.

Policy review

A board may need to revise or expand upon an existing equity and/or antiracism/ethnocultural policy or develop a new one. As well, during its cyclical process of reviewing and revising its policies, a board is expected to take steps to align all its other policies and procedures (e.g., on safe schools, student discipline, staff hiring) with its equity and inclusive education policy. This process will help the board to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of board and school operations.

Continuous improvement

The ministry expects a board to demonstrate continuous improvement such that, wherever a board starts, progress is evident on an annual basis towards the goal of embedding the equity and inclusive education policy into the operations of the board. A board is expected, at a minimum, to meet the timelines stated in the strategy and PPM No. 119. However, the implementation of any action item may be accelerated for boards that are ahead of the ministry's implementation timelines, particularly where the action item pertains to employment.

Implementation plans

Implementation plans need to be aligned with the strategy and with PPM No. 119 and should be developed in consultation with the full range of education and community stakeholders, including parents, staff, and students. A board may establish a committee, or may use an existing equity committee, that is representative of the community to assist in policy development and implementation.

Scope of policy development and implementation planning

The initial policy development and implementation plan should span up to three years and should include:

- the board's vision and mission statements;
- clearly stated annual objectives and measurable outcomes at both the system and school levels;
- procedures and indicators for annually measuring and evaluating progress;
- a description of active and ongoing partnerships.

Considerations at the system level

At the system level, all board improvement plan goals should be viewed through an equity and inclusive education lens. A board's improvement plan, within the context of the board's multi-year plan, should include at least one measurable equity and inclusive education goal focused on high expectations to help students achieve their potential. Directors of Education will be expected to communicate their board's progress towards achieving the stated goal(s) in their annual report to the ministry.

Considerations at the school level

At the school level, the school improvement plan should align with the board improvement plan. Progress towards meeting school improvement goals should be reported annually to the board and to the school community.

Making connections

A board is expected to identify an equity and inclusive education contact to liaise with the ministry and with other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

Eight "Sample Work Plan" templates follow, one for each area of focus. These may assist a board in developing its implementation plan. Each template includes the appropriate action items from the strategy.

The "mission statement" for each template uses the language provided in the sample policies (see Appendix 1, "Sample Policies").

Sample Work Plan – Areas of Focus

1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

Mission Statement: The board is committed to serving students in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **1.1 (2008–2009)** review existing equity and inclusive education policies and/or begin to develop or extend such policies;						
1.2 (2009–2010) develop or revise policies on equity and inclusive education for implementation by September 2010;						
1.3 (2010–2011) implement equity and inclusive education policies;						
1.4 (2010–2011) embed equity and inclusive education principles in board and school improvement plans;						
1.5 (2011–2012) implement positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning.						

Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices *(continued)*

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
Schools will: **1.6 (2009–2010)** develop and implement strategies to engage students, parents, and the broader community actively in the review, development, and implementation of initiatives to support and promote equity and inclusive education;						
1.7 (2011–2012) implement board equity and inclusive education policies, programs, and action plans that reflect the needs of their diverse school communities.						

2. Shared and committed leadership

Mission Statement: The board is committed to providing informed leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all forms of discrimination.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **2.1 (2008–2009)** identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources;						
2.2 (2011–2012) provide opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.						

3. School–community relationships

Mission Statement: The board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **3.1 (2009–2010)** review existing community partnerships so that they support the principles of equity and inclusive education and reflect the diversity of the broader community;						
3.2 (2009–2010) implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives.						
Schools will: **3.3 (2009–2010)** implement strategies to review existing community partnerships so that they reflect the diversity of the broader community;						
3.4 (2009–2010) work towards representation of diverse groups on school committees.						

4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

Mission Statement: The board is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum and to reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize his or her learning potential.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **4.1 (2009–2010)** review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated;						
4.2 (2010–2011) support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.						
Schools will: **4.3 (2010–2011)** review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.						

5. Religious accommodation

Mission Statement: The board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **5.1 (2009–2010)** have religious accommodation guidelines in place, and communicate these guidelines to the school community.						

Note: See Appendix 4, "Sample Template: Religious Accommodation Guideline".

6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

Mission Statement: The board is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **6.1 (2009–2010))** implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives;						
6.2 (2009–2010) put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely and that will also enable boards to respond in a timely manner.						

8. Accountability and transparency

Mission Statement: The board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy; to embedding the principles into all other board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicating these results to the community.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **8.1 (2008–2009)** report on progress in the Director of Education's annual report;						
8.2 (2010–2011) provide information about equity and inclusive education policies, procedures, and practices to students, administrators, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers, and make efforts to assist parents who do not understand the language of the board;						
8.3 (2011–2012) establish processes that include performance indicators to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies, programs, and procedures.						
Schools will: **8.4 (2009–2010)** report progress annually to the school board;						
8.5 (2010–2011) develop school improvement plans that are aligned with Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy;						
8.6 (2011–2012) review and establish self-assessment processes to determine the effectiveness of the school's equity and inclusive education plans and procedures.						

Implementation Plan Reflection Tool

Questions	Yes	No	In process
1. Is the implementation plan aligned with the principles and provisions of the equity and inclusive education strategy and PPM No. 119?			
2. Does the implementation plan clearly address all eight areas of focus in PPM No. 119?			
3. Does the three-year implementation plan begin in 2009–10?			
4. Is there a procedure to enable diverse communities to provide input into the development, review, and monitoring of the implementation plan?			
5. Does the implementation plan include provisions to embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all other board policies during the cyclical review of board policies and practices?			
6. Are there procedures to ensure that equity and inclusive education goals are included in board and school improvement plans?			
7. Is a procedure for an annual review included in the implementation plan?			
8. Is there a procedure to document progress and report on it in the Director of Education's annual report?			
9. Is there a procedure to communicate the implementation plan and progress in carrying it out to the ministry, school board, and community?			
10. Is the board's implementation plan included in the board's multi-year plan?			

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Purpose of monitoring and reporting

The purpose of monitoring is to determine that a board is working towards meeting ministry requirements and goals as set out in the strategy and PPM No. 119, and to measure a board's progress in implementing equity and inclusive education principles to reduce achievement gaps for all students.

The purpose of reporting is to demonstrate in a transparent manner that a board is making progress towards meeting ministry requirements and goals, as set out in the strategy and PPM No. 119, and to inform stakeholders about progress made towards reducing achievement gaps for all students through implementing equity and inclusive education principles.

Reporting on progress

A board is expected to report its progress to the ministry in the Director of Education's annual report. As well, the board is expected to provide information on its progress to the local community. The Director's annual report should include the revised or new equity and inclusive education policy, the religious accommodation guideline, progress on achieving the equity goals in the board's improvement plan, and, flowing from the board's cyclical review of other policies, details of progress in embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of the learning and working environment.

Collecting and analysing data

Data can be words, numbers, or observations that are collected systematically, usually for a specific purpose. Some boards and schools already collect the following types of data:

- *demographic* – contextual data that relate to equity and inclusive education (e.g., students' ethnicity and/or gender; community socio-economic factors that may be taken into consideration when planning for improved student achievement; enrolment, attendance, and graduation data);
- *perceptual* – students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of the learning environment, values and beliefs, attitudes, observations;

- *student learning* – student achievement data (e.g., teacher observations; samples of students' classroom work; results of informal and formal assessments; report cards or large-scale assessment results);
- *school processes* – school programs and processes to inform student achievement.

Evidence-informed decision making

Boards and schools are already moving further towards a culture of evidence-informed decision making. The ministry has taken significant steps to improve the use and reporting of data through the Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) initiative. For example, the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) enables the tracking, over time, of accurate and complete student data needed to examine trends and patterns related to student progress and to produce cohort indicators (e.g., graduation rates, credit accumulation). Seven MISA Professional Network Centres (PNCs) operate as learning communities across the province, providing connections to the research sector and promoting the sharing of information and effective practices across the education sector.

Effective practice

Boards and schools regularly use research and performance indicators to measure progress and to guide programming in support of continuous improvement. Student Success, for example, uses indicators to monitor credit accumulation, students at risk, rates of students leaving French-language schools, fulfilment of the secondary school literacy requirement for graduation, enrolment and mark distribution in particular courses, and achievement gaps in pass rates among academic, applied, and locally developed compulsory courses.

Boards are expected to use research data to identify practices that will support student achievement and close achievement gaps. A common characteristic of high-performing schools is their practice of translating the planned collection and use of data into priorities, goals, and strategies linked to school improvement planning. Boards are encouraged to use SMART (**S**trategic and Specific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**esults-based, **T**ime-bound) goals and short- and long-term strategies to help develop, implement, and monitor effective instructional plans. The school improvement planning cycle is the vehicle for translating collected data into constructive change in classrooms and the school.

Guidelines for collecting data

When collecting data, boards and schools must adhere to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) (and provincial schools, to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act [FIPPA]) and the Education Act and regulations made under the act. MFIPPA establishes the way in which school boards must protect an individual's right to privacy

when collecting, retaining, using, disclosing, and disposing of personal information, and FIPPA does the same with respect to information held by the provincial government. These acts also establish the right of individuals to request access to information held by school boards and governments. Boards should consult with their legal counsel and freedom of information coordinators to ensure that they are fulfilling all their legal responsibilities. Furthermore, when developing their policies, boards must respect all applicable collective agreements.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Guidelines for Collecting Data on Enumerated Grounds Under the Code* explain when it is permissible to collect and analyse data based on "enumerated grounds", such as race, disability, or sex. The guidelines state that:

> A data collection program should clearly set out a *Code*-legitimate purpose: to monitor and evaluate potential discrimination, identify and remove systemic barriers, ameliorate or prevent disadvantage and/or promote substantive equality for individuals identified by enumerated grounds. … Regardless of the method of data collection, the individuals on whom data is being collected, or the broader public in general, must be informed why such information is being collected and how the collection and use of such data will assist to relieve disadvantage or discrimination and achieve equal opportunity. (pp. 2–3)

A board that currently collects or is planning to collect data based on the enumerated grounds should adhere to the OHRC guidelines. Several boards are currently collecting student self-identification data.

The resource document *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students, 2007* was designed to help Ontario school boards develop effective policies and practices for voluntary, confidential Aboriginal student self-identification.

Communication

Effectively communicating how data will be used is essential. A board should make clear that the data it collects will be used only for the purposes of improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

A board will need to determine what data will be collected, how the data will be used, and with whom and in what manner the data will be shared. It will need to clearly communicate this information to its school communities, especially to parents.

Guidelines for reporting progress

A board shall establish clear procedures and processes to assess progress towards the goals identified in its equity and inclusive education implementation plan. For example, the board will need to develop a process to determine that board and school improvement plans have included equity and inclusive education goals, so that Directors of Education may include this information in the annual report, as required by PPM No. 119.

Sample indicators

In the following pages, some sample indicators of progress related to the eight areas of focus are outlined. Indicators may be grouped into the following types:

- *status indicators*, which describe the board's position at the beginning of the process and provide the baseline information against which future progress can be measured;
- *facilitative indicators*, which describe the supportive context and processes already in place that can facilitate implementation, such as the level of engagement of the board, the school, and other stakeholders in the process; and
- *effective (outcome) indicators*, which measure short-term, mid-term, and long-term results.

The three types of indicators are included in the following examples. Boards may find the language, template, and/or format of these indicators useful in developing their own indicators.

1 Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

- The board has a revised or new equity and inclusive education policy.
- The principles of the equity and inclusive education policy are embedded in all revised or new board policies, programs, guidelines, operations, and practices.
- Training is provided to those who regularly hire new staff to facilitate fair, equitable, and inclusive hiring processes and practices.
- Opportunities are provided for stakeholders, including students and parents, to provide input into board improvement plans.
- The board and schools have reviewed their codes of conduct to determine that they include the principles of equity and inclusive education and address harassment and discrimination.
- Meeting dates are scheduled to take into account faith holy days, in order to remove possible deterrents to attendance by parents and community members.

2 Shared and committed leadership

- A system plan is developed to build and sustain staff capacity in the areas of equity and inclusive education.
- Training is provided for students, administrators, teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff, and trustees on equity and inclusive education and leadership initiatives.
- An equity and inclusive education contact person is identified to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- Selection criteria for persons in positions of additional responsibility include demonstrated commitment, knowledge, and skills related to equity and inclusive education principles and practices.

3 School–community relationships

- The board has developed a profile of its diverse communities.
- Diverse communities are involved in partnership activities within the board.
- Processes are established to identify and address systemic barriers that may deter or prevent any community members from participating in board and school activities.
- Diverse communities are represented on existing board and school committees (e.g., Special Education Advisory Committee, Parent Involvement Committee, School Council, Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee).
- Mechanisms are in place (e.g., school climate surveys) to determine if parents/guardians feel welcome and comfortable in the schools and at the board offices.

4 Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

- A board procedure is established to assess learning materials for discriminatory bias.
- Resources and instructional strategies:
  - are in compliance with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to the prohibited grounds of discrimination;
  - show people of different races, genders, and ages in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities;
  - explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada, and the factors that shaped these roles;
  - encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Code (e.g., race, gender, disability, faith) in society, the community, and the school.
- Training based on the belief that all students can learn is reflected in classroom teachers' and guidance counsellors' expectations of students, assessment and evaluation practices, counselling about available program options, and other counselling practices.

- A variety of assessment strategies and instruments are used to inform short- and long-term planning to reduce gaps in student achievement and improve student learning.
- Parents are actively involved in assessment and placement decisions, including those required by the Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

5 Religious accommodation

- A guideline is developed that outlines religious accommodations available to students and staff.
- The guideline is developed in partnership with multiple faith communities and with individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith.
- The provisions of the guideline are actively communicated to students, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers.
- Community resources are identified that can provide information to school staff about the faith needs of individuals in the school and school community.
- Training is provided on the legislative and policy context of religious accommodation.

6 School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

- School codes of conduct are revised to explicitly address all forms of racism, discrimination, and harassment.
- All students, parents, and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected.
- Every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.
- School codes of conduct reflect the needs of the diverse communities served by the board and are developed with the active involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members.
- Guidelines and procedures are reviewed or developed to address the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code as they may apply to students, staff, and others in the community.
- A board procedure is established to enable students and staff to report incidents of harassment and discrimination safely and have confidence that they will receive a timely and appropriate response.
- Information about the new or revised procedures is communicated to all students, staff, and others in the school board.

7. Professional learning

Mission Statement: The board is committed to providing the school community, including students, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

Action Item	SMART Goal	Indicators	Measures	Targets	Responsibility	Timelines
The board will: **7.1 (2010 – 2011)** support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices;						
7.2 (2011–2012) provide opportunities for students, administrators, teachers, support staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.						
Schools will: **7.3 (2010–2011)** review classroom strategies and revise them as needed to help ensure that they are aligned with and reflect school-wide equity and inclusive education policies.						

Note: All trustees, administrators, teachers, including guidance counsellors, and support staff need specific training and professional learning on antiracism and antidiscrimination.

7 Professional learning

- Antiracism and antidiscrimination training is provided, including training in prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Opportunities are provided for students, administrators, teachers, support and board staff, and trustees to participate in equity and inclusive education training and leadership initiatives.
- A board equity and inclusive education contact is identified to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.
- The principles of equity and inclusive education are modelled and incorporated in professional learning programs.
- Students are encouraged and supported in efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.

8 Accountability and transparency

- Equity and inclusive education goals are embedded in board and school improvement plans.
- The equity and inclusive education policy is actively communicated to students, teachers, parents, school staff, school councils, and volunteers.
- Steps are taken to increase the participation of parents/guardians, trustees, students, and the community in the development of the equity and inclusive education policy.
- All board staff are trained to uphold, and students and parents are informed about, the protections enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- All incidents of discrimination and harassment are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The board equity and inclusive policy is posted on the board website.

Appendix 1

Sample Policies

1. Sample Policy for Public District School Boards

Policy No. ___

Title: **Equity and Inclusive Education Policy**

Date issued: June 2009

Review date: June 2012

A. Policy Statement[5]

The public school board is committed to excellence in education and equitable educational outcomes for all students. The board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy and in PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009).

The public school board confirms and upholds the principles enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The board believes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to all programs, services, and resources are critical to the well-being of those who serve our school system and to the achievement of successful outcomes by all those whom we serve.

The board is committed to fairness, equity, and inclusive education as essential principles of our school system, and all our policies, programs, operations, and practices will reflect these values. The board will not allow discrimination or any expression thereof by members of the school community.

5. An alternative sample policy statement for Catholic school boards is provided on page 55.

B. Areas of Focus

The board regards the following eight areas of focus as important in an equitable and inclusive education environment.

1. **Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices**

   The board is committed to serving students in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices.

2. **Shared and committed leadership**

   The board is committed to providing informed leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all forms of discrimination.

3. **School–community relationships**

   The board is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized and their needs are met.

4. **Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices**

   The board is committed to implementing an inclusive curriculum and to reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize his or her learning potential.

5. **Religious accommodation**

   The board acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff.

6. **School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment**

   The board is committed to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

7. **Professional learning**

   The board is committed to providing the school community, including students, with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

8. Accountability and transparency

The board is committed to assessing and monitoring its progress in implementing an equity and inclusive education policy; to embedding the principles into all other board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices; and to communicating these results to the community.

C. Procedures and Implementation Plans

The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to support the implementation of this policy.

II. Alternative Policy Statement for Catholic District School Boards

A. Policy Statement

The Catholic school board recognizes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God, and as such deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. The board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy and PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009). The board recognizes that its school system gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, consistent with the Constitution Act, 1867, section 93, and the protections afforded in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Within a context of a Catholic school system, the board is committed to promoting the values of respect, dignity, and fairness for all. Our schools will maintain a learning and working environment in which differences are recognized and respected.

It is the policy of the Catholic school board to provide in all its operations an educational environment that promotes and supports diversity as well as the equal attainment of life opportunities for all students, staff, parents, and community members. The board will not allow discrimination or any expression thereof by any members of the school community.

Appendix 2

Getting Started

A SAMPLE PROCESS for reviewing and/or developing an equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan is outlined below.

1. Initiate a process for board policy review and/or development

2. Develop a process for consultation with stakeholder groups such as the following:

- students
- school staff and administration
- parent groups and school councils
- members of the community
- school board trustees
- service agencies and community networks
- religious/faith communities
- human rights organizations
- advocates
- federations and unions

3. Review and/or develop board policy

The board policy must address the eight areas of focus.

The policy must also:

- be aligned with the guiding principles of the equity and inclusive education strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009);
- identify issues that need to be addressed in the existing board policy;
- provide a rationale and purpose for a religious accommodation guideline.

When developing policy, boards may wish to consider:

- expanding an existing mandated board committee to include equity and inclusive education;
- using an existing equity committee;
- establishing an advisory committee on equity and inclusive education.

4. Develop an implementation plan that may include:

- objectives
- a plan of action
- expected outcomes
- indicators of progress
- responsibilities
- timelines
- communication strategies
- training requirements
- monitoring and reporting requirements
- tools and resources

5. Provide for accountability and transparency

Develop procedures to provide for accountability and transparency in all stages of policy review, development, and implementation.

Appendix 3

Sample Classroom, School, and Board Self-reflection Tools

A. Classroom Self-reflection Tool for Teachers

Effective leadership by classroom teachers in achieving equity and inclusive education is a prerequisite for securing the best possible outcome for every student in Ontario.

In my classroom, I:

- foster a commitment to equity of outcomes and to closing achievement gaps between students;
- use inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions with students and parents;
- demonstrate a belief that all students can learn and a commitment to meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways;
- work to provide classroom materials and activities that represent the diversity, values, backgrounds, and experiences of students;
- communicate and work effectively with a diverse range of parents;
- model the equity and inclusive education values and vision of the school;
- have worked with students to develop a process through which concerns and issues about discrimination can be identified and resolved;
- have worked with students to develop a survey to measure progress towards creating an equitable and inclusive classroom environment;
- use "teachable moments" to address non-inclusive, disrespectful, or discriminatory classroom behaviours;
- encourage student leadership by involving students in establishing and monitoring guidelines for achieving inclusive classrooms;
- understand that equity and inclusive education principles apply to every student and not just to certain groups of students; and,
- assume responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify personal beliefs and biases that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive education principles.

B. School Self-reflection Tool for Administrators

(Sample Case Study)

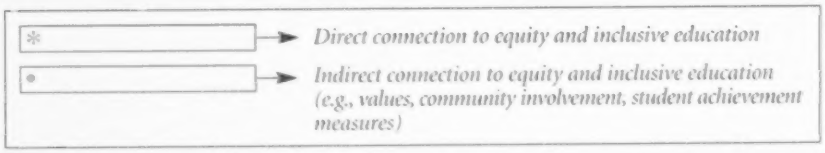
Effective leadership by schools and boards in achieving equity and inclusive education is a prerequisite for securing the best possible outcome for every student in Ontario.

Both Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy and its leadership strategy are founded on the government's three core priorities: high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement, and increased public confidence in publicly funded education. The Ontario leadership framework is central to both strategies, as it outlines for principals and vice-principals a set of core leadership practices and competencies – skills, knowledge, and attitudes – that describe effective leadership.

Sample Case Study

Equity and Inclusive Education

As staff move through a school self-assessment process, they determine the effectiveness of their strategies for meeting student learning and achievement goals, identifying discriminatory biases and systemic barriers, collecting evidence, and taking action to ensure continuous improvement. During the process, they determine that a further review of school climate is required. The principal and the vice-principal refer to the Ontario leadership framework to identify practices and competencies that pertain to equity and inclusive education. They use the following highlighting system to classify direct and indirect connections to equity and inclusive education:


*
Direct connection to equity and inclusive education
•
Indirect connection to equity and inclusive education (e.g., values, community involvement, student achievement measures)

The principal and vice-principal realize that every practice and competency is connected in some way to equity and inclusive education. However, the highlighted sections provide an opportunity to focus specifically on the next steps for them as leaders and for the staff. In considering the context of the school, they feel that "Building Relationships and Developing People" is a domain in the framework that could help facilitate discussion and growth.

The principal and vice-principal facilitate a session with the staff in which they provide the highlighted "Building Relationships and Developing People" portion of the framework to the staff. The staff are asked to brainstorm in groups what the practices and competencies might "look like" in their school (*see next page for the results of this activity*). This information will be used by staff to reflect on the equity and inclusive education implementation plan for the school.

Leadership framework for principals and vice-principals can be found at: http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/files/FrameworkPrincipals.pdf

Practices

- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- leads by example, modelling core values

Competencies

- foster an open, fair, and equitable culture
- communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media
- foster anti-discriminatory principles and practices
- the impact of change on organizations and individuals
- commitment to shared leadership for improvement

- new ways to administer, adapt materials, and learn about the impact of human rights on school climate
- equitable access to opportunity and achievement
- high expectations for all staff and students to perform well and achieve success
- curriculum, library, and classroom materials, visual displays, and other resources to see what has been omitted or included and assess whether any discriminatory bias is present
- behaviour that is consistent with the principles of equity and inclusive education
- beliefs and assumptions about a diverse society
- aspects of diversity with respect to "figures of authority", role models, rules

Practices

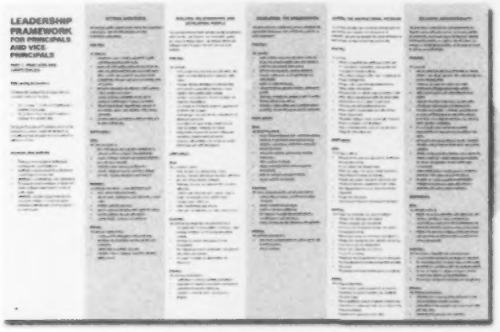
- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- leads by example, modelling Gospel values

Competencies

- foster an open, fair, and equitable culture
- communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media
- demonstrate cultural competency
- the impact of change on organizations and individuals
- commitment to shared servant leadership

Catholic leadership framework for principals and vice-principals can be found at: http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/files/CatholicFramework.pdf

Leaders in the central administration can utilize the Ontario leadership framework for supervisory officers, focusing on board-level practices and competencies that support the promotion of equity and inclusive education. Supervisory officers play an essential role by putting in place supportive system practices and procedures for school and system leaders, and provide critical system-wide leadership.



Leadership framework for principals and vice-principals can be found at: http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/files/FrameworkPrincipals.pdf

Building Relationships and Developing People

Practices

- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- leads by example, modelling core values

Competencies

Skills

- foster an open, fair, and equitable culture
- communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media
- foster anti-discriminatory principles and practices

Knowledge

- the impact of change on organizations and individuals

Attitudes

- commitment to shared leadership for improvement

Staff Brainstorm Results:

When "Building Relationships and Developing People" and promoting "Equity and Inclusive Education", it will be important to reflect upon:

- new ways to administer, adapt materials, and learn about the impact of human rights on school climate
- equitable access to opportunity and achievement
- high expectations for all staff and students to perform well and achieve success
- curriculum, library, and classroom materials, visual displays, and other resources to see what has been omitted or included, and assess whether any discriminatory bias is present
- behaviour that is consistent with the principles of equity and inclusive education
- beliefs and assumptions about a diverse society
- aspects of diversity with respect to "figures of authority", role models, rules

Building Relationships and Developing People

Practices

- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- leads by example, modelling Gospel values

Competencies

Skills

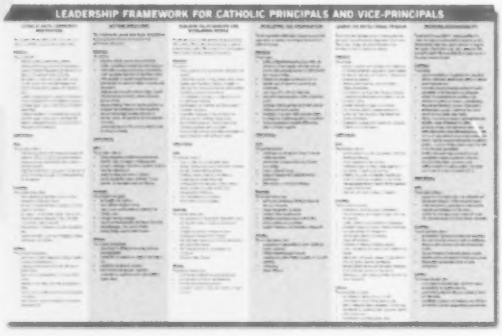
- foster an open, fair, and equitable culture
- communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media
- demonstrate cultural competency

Knowledge

- the impact of change on organizations and individuals

Attitudes

- commitment to shared servant leadership



Catholic leadership framework for principals and vice-principals can be found at: http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/files/CatholicFramework.pdf

Leaders in the central administration can utilize the Ontario leadership framework for supervisory officers, focusing on board-level practices and competencies that support the promotion of equity and inclusive education. Supervisory officers play an essential role by putting in place supportive system practices and procedures for school and system leaders, and provide critical system-wide leadership.

Appendix 4

Sample Template: Religious Accommodation Guideline

THE FOLLOWING SAMPLE TEMPLATE highlights some of the areas a board may consider in developing its religious accommodation guideline.

1. Introduction

- The board's mission and vision statement
- Purpose of the religious accommodation guideline
- Duty to accommodate

2. Legislative and Policy Context

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 15
- The Ontario Human Rights Code; Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances
- The Education Act, which affirms the constitutional rights of Catholic and French-language rights-holders in Ontario
- The Constitution Act, 1867, section 93

3. Possible Areas of Accommodation

- Observation of major religious holy days, commemorations, and celebrations
- School opening and closing exercises
- Prayer/rituals
- Dietary requirements
- Religious attire
- Modesty requirements in physical education activities
- Participation in daily activities and curriculum
- Scheduling for religious leaves
- Recruitment, job applications, and succession planning

4. Additional Considerations Under the Ontario Human Rights Code

- Protection under the Code
- Limitations
- Competing interests
- Undue hardship

5. Appendices

- Calendar of multi-faith days
- Description of religions and requirements
- Places of worship
- Glossary

A number of boards have taken steps to provide religious accommodation. For more detailed information, the religious accommodation guidelines from the Toronto District School Board, the York Region District School Board, and the Greater Essex County School Board are comprehensive resources that demonstrate how boards have met their local needs and circumstances.

Appendix 5

Sample Questions for Board and School Surveys

BOARD AND/OR SCHOOL LEADERS may wish to gather information from or assess perceptions of staff, students, parents, and community members with respect to racism, diversity, equity, inclusive education, safety, bullying, and harassment. The purpose may be to establish baseline data, to assess program effectiveness, or to measure policy implementation.

The following surveys offer a variety of types of questions that board and school leaders may find helpful.

- Ministry of Education, Sample School Climate Surveys (Student, Grades 4–6; Student, Grades 7–12; Parent; Teacher), available at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/climate.html
- Toronto District School Board, *Grade 7/8 Student Census* and *Grade 9–12 Student Census*, available at www.tdsb.on.ca
- Simcoe County District School Board, *About Your School: A Survey for Students in Grades 4–6* and *About Your School: A Survey for Students in Grades 7–12*, available at www.scdsb.on.ca

Appendix 6

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009)

Ontario — Ministry of Education

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

Date of Issue: June 24, 2009

Effective: Until revoked or modified

Subject: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

Application:
Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Superintendents
Principals of Elementary Schools
Principals of Secondary Schools
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Reference: This memorandum replaces Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity", July 13, 1993.

INTRODUCTION

Ontario's publicly funded education system supports and reflects the democratic values of fairness, equity, and respect for all. Recognizing the importance of education, the Ontario government has established three core priorities:

- high levels of student achievement
- reduced gaps in student achievement
- increased public confidence in publicly funded education

An equitable, inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving these core priorities, and is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners. "Equity and excellence go hand in hand. … In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status do not prevent students from achieving ambitious outcomes. Our experience shows that barriers can be removed when all education partners create the conditions needed for success."[1]

Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion based on an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed within a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens. Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop students as learners and prepare them for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible citizens. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

1. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2008), p. 8.

On April 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (hereafter referred to as "the strategy"). This document sets out a vision for an equitable and inclusive education system. The action plan contained in the document focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' learning, growth, and contribution to society. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards[2] on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies to support student achievement. Our schools need to help students develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, and caring citizens who can contribute to both a strong economy and a cohesive society.

BACKGROUND

The ministry has issued several policy/program memoranda to support equity, student achievement, and positive school climates, including Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, "Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity", July 13, 1993.[3] When No. 119 (1993) was issued, many boards focused on creating learning environments that respected the cultures of all students. The antiracism and ethnocultural policies contained in No. 119 (1993) went "beyond a broad focus on multiculturalism and race relations"[4] to focus on identifying and changing institutional policies and procedures, as well as individual behaviours and practices that may be racist in their impact. No. 119 (1993) sought to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to live in an increasingly diverse world, appreciate diversity, and reject discriminatory behaviours and attitudes. Several boards have expanded these antiracism and ethnocultural policies into more inclusive equity policies that address a broader range of discriminatory factors.

In addition, it is now recognized that such factors as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender, and class can intersect to create additional barriers for some students. Many organizations, including the United Nations, are recognizing the compounding impact of such intersections on discrimination. Ministry and board policies, therefore, should also take intersecting factors into account.

Although much has been done – and continues to be done – to build the publicly funded education system's capacity to foster equity and inclusiveness in boards and schools, evidence indicates that some groups of students continue to encounter discriminatory barriers to learning. Recent research shows that

2. In this memorandum, *school board(s)* and *board(s)* refer to both district school boards and school authorities.
3. Others include Policy/Program Memoranda No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", January 12, 1989; No. 112, "Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", December 6, 1990; No. 127, "The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement", October 13, 2004; No. 128, "The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct", October 4, 2007; No. 144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention", October 4, 2007; and No. 145, "Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour", October 4, 2007.
4. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1993), p. 7.

students who feel connected to teachers, to other students, and to the school itself do better academically.[5] This memorandum therefore broadens the scope of the previous Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (1993) to take into account a broad range of equity factors, as well as all of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other similar considerations. This memorandum fully supports and expands on the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity that were outlined in No. 119 (1993), and does not reflect a weakened or reduced commitment to antiracism or ethnocultural equity. This memorandum also promotes a system-wide approach to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to help ensure that all students feel welcomed and accepted in school life.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARDS

All publicly funded school boards will review and/or develop, implement, and monitor an equity and inclusive education policy in accordance with the requirements set out in this memorandum and in the strategy. The strategy is designed to promote fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with which school boards are already required to comply. Boards will develop and implement their equity and inclusive education policy within the context of the denominational rights of Roman Catholic[6] schools as set out in section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Education Act, and the language rights of French-language rights holders as set out in section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms[7] and the Education Act. Boards must comply with all other aspects of the Education Act and regulations made under the act, including Ontario Regulation 181/98, which pertains to students with special education needs.[8] Boards must also comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), as applicable. Other relevant legislation, such as the Youth Criminal Justice Act, must be referenced where appropriate. In addition, boards should refer to *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007; Ontario's Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-Language Education, 2005;*[9] and *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007.* They should also consult with their legal counsel and Freedom of Information coordinators to ensure that they are fulfilling all their legal responsibilities.

By the beginning of the 2010–11 school year (September 2010), boards will have in place an equity and inclusive education policy that addresses the eight areas of focus outlined in this memorandum, a guideline on religious accommodation, and an implementation plan. Boards may need to revise or

5. D. Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York, NY: Bantam, 2006).
6. Section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* gives the provinces the exclusive right to govern education, subject to the preservation of denominational education rights.
7. Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* enshrines minority language education rights, subject to certain limitations.
8. Ontario Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils", requires school boards to consider placement of students with special education needs into regular classrooms before considering alternative placements.
9. Boards should also refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 148, "Policies Governing Admission to French-Language Schools in Ontario", April 22, 2009; and *L'admission, l'accueil et l'accompagnement des élèves dans les écoles de langue française de l'Ontario – Énoncé de politique et directives, 2009.*

expand upon their existing equity and/or antiracism/ethnocultural policy or develop a new policy on equity and inclusive education. As well, during the cyclical process of reviewing and revising their policies, boards will take steps to align all their other policies and procedures (e.g., on safe schools, student discipline, staff hiring and development) with their equity and inclusive education policy. This process will help to ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of board and school operations.

School board policies must be comprehensive and must cover the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code prohibits discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, disability, creed (includes religion), sex, sexual orientation, age, family status, and marital status. Boards may also address related issues resulting from the intersection of the dimensions of diversity that can also act as a systemic barrier to student learning.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Equity and inclusive education policies and implementation plans will be consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in the strategy, with the requirements in this memorandum, and with the ministry document entitled *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2009* (hereafter referred to as "the guidelines"). These three documents should be used together when boards are reviewing and/or developing and implementing their equity and inclusive education policy, and when conducting their cyclical reviews of all their other policies.

When reviewing or developing their equity and inclusive education policy, boards are expected to consult widely with students, parents,[10] principals, teachers and other staff, school councils, their Special Education Advisory Committee, their Parent Involvement Committee and other committees (e.g., Diversity Committee; First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee), federations and unions, service organizations, and community partners in order to reflect the diversity of the community.

Boards have flexibility to adapt their equity and inclusive education policy to take into account local needs and circumstances.

Areas of Focus

The three goals of the equity and inclusive education strategy are as follows:

- *shared and committed leadership* by the ministry, boards, and schools to eliminate discrimination through the identification and removal of biases and barriers
- *equity and inclusive education policies and practices* to support positive learning environments that are respectful and welcoming to all
- *accountability and transparency* with ongoing progress demonstrated and communicated to the ministry and the community

10. In this memorandum, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

In order to achieve these goals, each school board policy on equity and inclusive education will cover the following eight areas of focus.

1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices

Through cyclical policy reviews, boards will embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all their other policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, so that an equity and inclusive education focus is an integral part of every board's operations and permeates everything that happens in its schools.

Boards should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. The board's workforce should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board's workforce should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board's jurisdiction.

2. Shared and committed leadership

Board and school leaders must be responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities. Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School boards and schools are expected to provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning. Specifically, boards will identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

In accordance with the principles of the ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective board and school leaders promote the development of collaborative environments in which participants share a commitment to equity and inclusive education principles and practices. This collaborative approach includes and supports the active engagement of students, parents, federations and unions, colleges and universities, service organizations, and other community partners.

3. School–community relationships

Schools and boards will continue building their capacity – with the active engagement of parents and community partners – to create and sustain a positive school climate that supports student achievement. Each board and its schools should review the structures of existing committees and partnerships to help ensure that they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education. Boards should expand upon their outreach efforts in order to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members, and various organizations, including business groups (e.g., business education councils). Boards are encouraged to draw upon the expertise of their partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help them meet the diverse needs of their students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities. Strong relationships are necessary to effect real change so that all students can reach their potential regardless of personal circumstances.

4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the work force of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school.

Boards are expected to draw upon strategies that have been shown by the evidence to support student success and reduce achievement gaps. These include reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices to identify and eliminate stereotypes, discriminatory biases, and systemic barriers. For example, schools could make use of differentiated instruction, which takes into account the backgrounds and experiences of students in order to respond to their individual interests, aptitudes, and learning needs.

In order to help ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable and lead to improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies outlined in the assessment and evaluation section of the curriculum policy documents. Assessment tasks should be designed to ensure consistency of standards, and any discriminatory biases in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated should be identified and addressed.

5. Religious accommodation

School board policies on religious accommodation must be in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the requirements stated in Policy/Program Memoranda No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", and No. 112, "Education About Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools". As part of their new or revised equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan, boards will include a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the Ontario Human Rights Code, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed (includes religion) and imposes a duty to accommodate.[11] Accordingly, boards are expected to take appropriate steps to provide religious accommodation for students and staff.

6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment

Board policies on equity and inclusive education will be designed to foster a positive school climate that is free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A positive and inclusive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support positive student behaviour. These principles must also be applied in progressive discipline, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other

11. See *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, available at www.ohrc.on.ca.

factors.[12] When relationships are founded on mutual respect, a culture of respect becomes the norm. Boards will also put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will enable boards to respond in a timely manner.

Regular school and board monitoring of school climate is essential. Monitoring through school climate surveys, as outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, "Bullying Prevention and Intervention", can help identify inappropriate behaviours, barriers, or issues that should be addressed. Boards are therefore expected to incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education in their school climate surveys.

7. Professional learning

Professional learning activities must be ongoing and based on evidence of positive results. Boards will therefore provide opportunities for teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and will provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. Boards are also encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within their own organization, other boards, and their own community partners and agencies. Changing individual and collective behaviour, as well as organizational and institutional practices, will help to ensure that the education system is free from discrimination.

8. Accountability and transparency

Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of a board's goals and progress will increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools. It is expected that boards will post their equity and inclusive education policy on their website.

Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a board's multi-year plan, will take into consideration the board's equity and inclusive education policy. The plans should focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsive school climate.

The Director of Education's annual report will inform the ministry about the board's progress in implementing its equity and inclusive education policy. The report should also provide information on the status of embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all board policies and practices during the cyclical review process, and should describe the steps taken, progress made, and the impact on student achievement. In addition, progress will also be reported to the local community.

12. Ontario Regulation 472/07, "Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils", identifies mitigating factors and other factors that must be taken into account in individual cases.

IMPLEMENTATION

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in their development of an equity and inclusive education policy. The strategy is therefore being phased in over four years, beginning in 2008–09. The ministry expects boards to demonstrate continuous improvement, such that wherever a board starts, progress is evident on an annual basis towards the goal of embedding the equity and inclusive education policy into the operations of the board. Boards are expected, at a minimum, to meet the timelines as stated in the strategy and guidelines documents. However, the timelines for any action item may be accelerated for a board whose implementation process is ahead of the ministry's implementation timelines.

Implementation plans will:

- be three-year plans beginning in 2009–10, monitored annually by the board;
- contain clearly stated annual objectives and measurable outcomes at both the board and school levels;
- reflect consultation with community partners, and show evidence of active and ongoing partnerships with students, parents, and diverse communities;
- contain indicators for measuring and evaluating progress;
- contain timelines that are consistent with the strategy and the guidelines.

RESOURCES

To support boards in developing, implementing, and monitoring their policy on equity and inclusive education, the ministry is providing practical strategies, advice, and templates in the guidelines. The ministry will also review and conduct research on promising practices in equity and inclusive education, and will disseminate this information to boards.

APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are included for the purposes of this policy/program memorandum only.

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Inclusive Education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Appendix 7

Former Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (1993)

This document, which has been replaced by PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools" (June 24, 2009), is included here to provide school boards with additional information that will enhance their understanding of, and ability to apply, an antiracist approach in identifying and removing systemic barriers for racialized students. Boards are advised to refer to this memorandum to inform their review and/or development and implementation of a thorough and comprehensive equity and inclusive education policy.

Ontario

Ministry of Education and Training

Issued under the authority of the Deputy Minister of Education and Training

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

Date of Issue: July 13, 1993

Effective: Until revoked or modified

Subject: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES ON ANTIRACISM AND ETHNOCULTURAL EQUITY

Application: Chairpersons of School Boards and Minority-Language Sections[1]
Directors of Education

Introduction

The Government of Ontario is committed to the goal of assuring high-quality education and equitable educational outcomes for all students in English- and French-language schools. The government also considers it essential that students be prepared to function effectively in an increasingly diverse world.

There is growing recognition that educational structures, policies, and programs have been mainly European in perspective and have failed to take into account the viewpoints, experiences, and needs of Aboriginal peoples[2] and many racial and ethnocultural minorities. As a result, systemic inequities exist in the school system that limit the opportunities for Aboriginal and other students and staff members of racial and ethnocultural minorities to fulfil their potential. Educators therefore need to identify and change institutional policies and procedures and individual behaviour and practices that are racist in their impact, if not in intent. In this regard, antiracist and ethnocultural equity education goes beyond multicultural education, which focuses on teaching about the cultures and traditions of diverse groups.

1. In this document, the term "school board" includes French- and English-language sections.

2. The terms "Aboriginal" and "Aboriginal peoples" refer to the original inhabitants, or indigenous peoples, of Canada and their descendants. Aboriginal peoples include the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

Background

In 1987, a provincial advisory committee produced a report entitled "The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity" that was intended to be a draft model policy document on race relations for school boards. This report was validated province-wide.

In the winter and spring of 1993, the ministry conducted a series of round-table discussions with school boards, which provided information on their activities, perspectives, and needs in the areas of antiracism and ethnocultural equity. Information received at these meetings has been used in developing the present policy directions and requirements.

Legislative Requirements

In accordance with an amendment made in 1992 to the Education Act,[3] every school board shall develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy. Boards shall then submit their policies and plans to the Minister for approval, and implement changes as directed by the Minister. Boards' implementation of their policies will entail reviewing their operations and making fundamental changes in many aspects of their operations. Some of the changes required will take place immediately; others will take place over time. The document entitled Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation has been produced to assist school boards in the development of their policies and implementation plans.

Several of the requirements for school board policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the sections of boards. French-language school boards and French-language sections will develop policies and implementation plans that respect Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Parts XII and XIII of the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2. Sections may submit their policies and implementation plans as part of the overall board submission.

Timelines for Development, Approval, and Implementation of Policies

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in the development of policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity and in the implementation of related

3. Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2, section 8, subsection 1, paragraph 29.1 (July 1992 edition).

activities. Boards that already have related policies in place shall review and revise these policies to ensure that they meet the requirements outlined in this memorandum. These boards may begin submitting their revised policies and implementation plans to the ministry for approval in October 1993. School boards that are currently developing policies and implementation plans shall submit them to the ministry for approval as soon as they are completed.

Boards shall submit their policies and their implementation plans to the ministry no later than March 31, 1995.

Boards shall begin implementing their policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity upon receiving approval from the ministry. Implementation of these policies must begin by September 1, 1995.

Requirements for Policies and Implementation Plans

School board policies and implementation plans shall be comprehensive and shall be designed to integrate the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity into all aspects of education programs and board operations. The policies and plans shall reflect a commitment by board administration and staff to identifying and addressing systemic inequities and barriers affecting Aboriginal peoples and racial and ethnocultural minorities in the planning and delivery of education programs and services.

Policies and implementation plans shall address the following ten major areas of focus:

- board policies, guidelines, and practices
- leadership
- school-community partnership
- curriculum
- student languages
- student evaluation, assessment, and placement
- guidance and counselling
- racial and ethnocultural harassment
- employment practices[4]
- staff development

4. For details see the section on "Employment Equity" on page 5.

The implementation plans shall:

- be five-year plans;
- contain clearly stated annual objectives and outcomes for implementation at both the system and the school levels;
- contain a plan of action to identify and eliminate racial and ethnocultural biases and barriers in board policies and practices and in the planning and delivery of educational programs;
- involve partnership activities with local communities, including Aboriginal groups, diverse racial and ethnocultural groups, and other education partners;
- contain mechanisms for evaluating progress, including an accountability mechanism for all of the school board staff.

The policy development and implementation processes shall be conducted in the language of the board. Boards and sections are encouraged to find alternative communication strategies when members of the community involved in the development of the policies and the implementation plan do not speak the language of the board.

At all stages of implementation, a high priority shall be assigned to broadening the curriculum to include diverse perspectives and to eliminating stereotyping. In the implementation of the policies, it is essential that staff members are made aware of the issues and are given opportunities to develop skills in dealing with racism.

Approval of Policies and Implementation Plans

Board policies and implementation plans are to be submitted for approval to the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training within the specified timelines. The ministry will review the policies and implementation plans and determine whether or not they satisfy the requirements for approval. The ministry will use the document Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards when evaluating boards' policies and implementation plans.

Monitoring of Implementation

There shall be community and student involvement in monitoring policy implementation. School boards shall submit annual progress reports to the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, the ministry will conduct cyclical audits of the policy implementation.

The ministry will make use of the document Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards in monitoring implementation of boards' antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies.

Employment Equity

Equitable employment practices form an integral part of boards' antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies and practices. The work force in the school board should reflect and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of Ontario's culturally and racially diverse population.

The proposed Employment Equity Act (Bill 79)[5] will provide all employers, including school boards, with direction for the development, implementation, and monitoring of employment equity plans. Consequently, school boards are advised not to undertake work-force surveys, define designated groups or subgroups, or determine numerical goals for designated groups before the proposed Employment Equity Act becomes law.

In the meantime, boards should begin to identify systemic barriers in employment, as well as establish equity principles, in order to lay the foundations for the development of employment equity plans in the future. Further information will be available after the proposed Employment Equity Act becomes law.

Ministry Assistance

The resource document Changing Perspectives will be released along with Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards. Vers une nouvelle optique, the French-language adaptation of Changing Perspectives, will be released in the fall of 1993. The ministry will be publishing additional resource materials in the future to assist boards in implementing their policies. The ministry's regional office staff are available to assist school boards with the development of policies and implementation plans and with the implementation of the policies.

Please share the information contained in this memorandum with all school board personnel.

5. An Act to Provide for Employment Equity for Aboriginal People, People With Disabilities, Members of Racial Minorities and Women.

Ontario

Ministry of Education and Training

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

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Appendix 8

Additional Policy/Program Memoranda

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108,
"Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools". January 12, 1989.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/108.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 120,
"School Board Policies on Violence Prevention in Schools". June 1, 1994.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/120.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 127,
"The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement". October 13, 2004.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/127.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128,
"The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct". October 4, 2007.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144,
"Bullying Prevention and Intervention". October 4, 2007.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145,
"Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour". October 4, 2007.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.html

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 148,
"Policies Governing Admission to French-language Schools in Ontario". April 22, 2009.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/148.html

Appendix 9

Resource: Racism Hurts

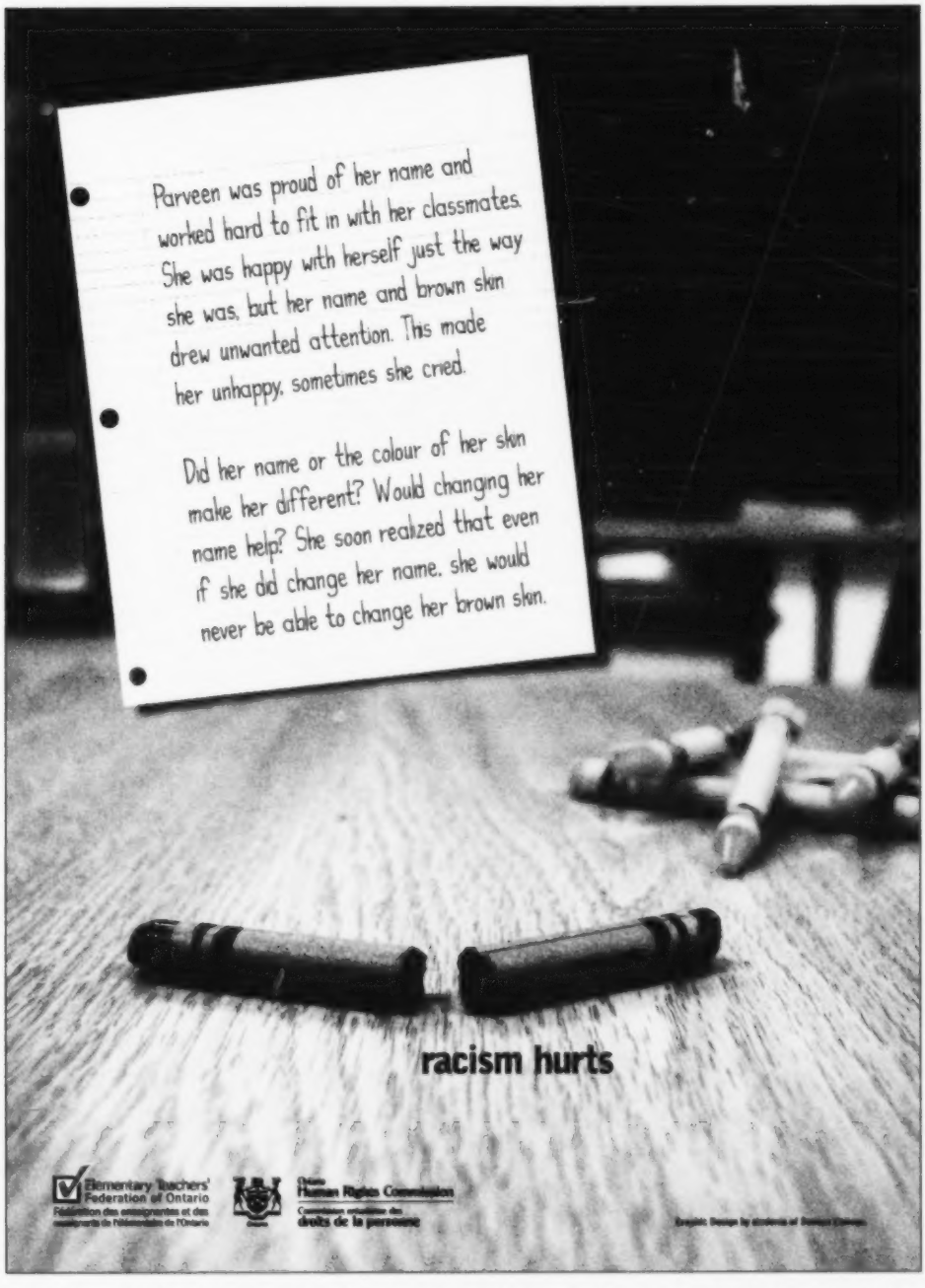
THE ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION (OTF) has broadened the Safe@School website to address the areas of racism, homophobia, and gender-based violence for teachers, administrators, and school staff. The enriched website will also include a new teacher training e-learning module focusing on equity issues.

The teacher federations have developed a number of excellent resources. The following is an example.

Racism Hurts

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Human Rights Commission have collaboratively developed a resource, "Racism Hurts", for elementary students. The package includes posters (see p. 68) and curriculum resources that assist teachers in beginning discussions with elementary students about human rights, discrimination, and racism.

The resource has curricular links to language arts (K–8) that focus on reading, writing, oral communication, media literacy, and drama and suggests activities for students. The narrative in the poster on the following page is one example of an activity that can be used with Grade 4 to 6 students. Parveen's story illustrates the impact of racism on a student.


Parveen was proud of her name and worked hard to fit in with her classmates. She was happy with herself just the way she was, but her name and brown skin drew unwanted attention. This made her unhappy, sometimes she cried.
Did her name or the colour of her skin make her different? Would changing her name help? She soon realized that even if she did change her name, she would never be able to change her brown skin.
racism hurts
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario
Ontario Human Rights Commission
Commission ontarienne des droits de la personne

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Appendix 10

Resources from the Ontario Human Rights Commission

Introduction

The following resources, developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, will be useful for the review and/or development and the implementation of the equity and inclusive education policy for a school board.

The commission's policies, guidelines, publications, fact sheets, and teacher tool kit are part of a number of resources for creating a safe and "positive school climate that fosters and promotes equity, inclusive education, and diversity" (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 11).

Extensive resources on the prohibited grounds pertaining to race, colour, citizenship, ancestry, ethnic origin, place of origin, sex, sexual orientation, and disability are available in both English and French at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Policy

- Aboriginal People and the Ontario Human Rights Code (n. d.)
- Disability and the Duty to Accommodate: Your Rights and Responsibilities (2000)
- Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances (1996)
- Racism and Racial Discrimination: Your Rights and Responsibilities (2005)
- Sexual Harassment: Your Rights and Responsibilities (1996)
- Sexual Orientation: Your Rights and Responsibilities (2000)

Additional Resources

Guidelines for Collecting Data on Enumerated Grounds Under the Code (2003)

The Ontario Human Rights Code permits the collection and analysis of data based on enumerated grounds, such as race, disability, or sex, as long as it is for legitimate purposes and not contrary to the code. Code-legitimate purposes include monitoring and evaluating discrimination, identifying and removing systemic barriers, ameliorating disadvantage, and promoting substantive equality. This guide assists with the collection of data within the Code requirements.

Guidelines on Accessible Education (2004)

These guidelines contain the commission's interpretation of provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code relating to discrimination against students because of disability. The guidelines address topics such as the principles of accommodation, creating a welcoming environment, and accommodation process and planning.

Guidelines on Developing Human Rights Policies and Procedures (2008)

These guidelines contain the commission's interpretation of provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code relating to organizational policies and procedures to address human rights issues and prevent violations.

HIRING? A Human Rights Guide (September 1999)

The guidelines and the sample application form illustrate the types of questions that are appropriate on employment application forms and at personal employment interviews. The sample application form provides suggestions and guidance to employers in designing their own employment application forms and in conducting interviews that respect human rights laws.

Human Rights at Work (3rd ed., 2008)

This publication helps employers to comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code in all aspects of employment and in creating a workplace environment in which every employee's rights are respected and protected.

Racial Slurs and Harassment and Racial Jokes (June 1996)

This publication defines racial harassment and identifies strategies for preventing racial slurs and harassment and the process for filing a complaint.

Sexual Harassment and Other Comments or Actions About a Person's Sex (November 1996)

This booklet defines and identifies the types of sexual harassment. It also identifies strategies for the prevention of sexual harassment and the process for filing a complaint.

The following published papers provide assistance in understanding the term *intersectionality* and the concept of competing rights claims in applying the Code.

- *An Intersectional Approach to Discrimination: Addressing Multiple Grounds in Human Rights Claims* (2001)
- *Balancing Conflicting Rights: Towards an Analytical Framework* (2005)

The OHRC website also has fact sheets such as:

- How Far Does the Duty to Accommodate Go?
- Racism and Racial Discrimination – Data Collection

The teacher tool kit *Teaching Human Rights in Ontario: An Education Package for Ontario Schools* (2001) is an educational package for Grades 9 to 12 developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to be used by teachers in Ontario schools to teach their students about the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the work of the commission. It is available in both English and French under the commission's public education section.

Glossary

This glossary is provided to assist educators in understanding various terms used in this document, as well as terms they may encounter in the context of discussions of equity and inclusive education.

Terminology in the area of equity and inclusive education is constantly evolving. The Ministry of Education recognizes that terms and usages favoured by various groups and individuals, in various contexts, and at different points in time may differ. Educators may find the definitions provided here helpful for use in contexts such as training and professional development.

ableism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people who have developmental, emotional, physical, sensory, or health-related disabilities. Ableism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Aboriginal peoples. The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states: "In this Act, 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada". These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their indigenous ancestry.

acceptance. An affirmation and recognition of people whose race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, abilities, or other, similar characteristics or attributes are different from one's own. Acceptance goes beyond tolerance, in that it implies a positive and welcoming attitude.

accommodation. An adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of the prohibited grounds

of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code or other, similar grounds. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Guidelines on Accessible Education* and *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

anti-Black racism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Black people, including people of African descent. Anti-Black racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

antidiscrimination education. An approach that seeks to eliminate from an educational system and its practices all forms of discrimination based on the prohibited grounds identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code and other, similar grounds. Anti-discrimination education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may unintentionally condone or foster discrimination, as well as the attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to discrimination, power, and privilege. Antidiscrimination education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

antiracist. Seeking the elimination of racism in all its forms, including systemic racism.

antiracist education. An approach that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racialized communities into an educational system and its practices. Antiracist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that may foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviours that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. It provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to critically examine issues related to racism, power, and privilege. Antiracist education promotes the removal of discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

antisemitism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against individual Jews or the Jewish people on the basis of their culture and religion. Antisemitism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

barrier. An obstacle to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

bias. An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

bullying. A form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

creed. One of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code, interpreted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to mean "religious creed" or "religion". Creed is "a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship" that is "sincerely held" and includes non-deistic belief systems. Creed does not include "secular, moral, or ethical beliefs or political convictions" or "religions that promote violence or hate towards others or that violate criminal law". Individuals who do not belong to a religion or practise any specific faith are also protected by the Code. (Refer to the *Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

cyberbullying. Bullying that occurs through the use of information and communication technologies (e.g., spreading rumours or hurtful images or comments by means of e-mail or text messaging, or on social media sites or personal websites).

disability. A term that covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, environmental sensitivities). A disability may be present from birth, may be caused by an accident, or may develop over time. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/disability.)

discrimination. Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

diversity. The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

dominant group. A group that is considered the most powerful and privileged of groups in a particular society and that exercises power and influence over others through social and political means.

duty to accommodate. The legal obligation that school boards, employers, unions, and service providers have under the Ontario Human Rights Code to take measures that enable people to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. (Refer to www.ohrc.on.ca.)

equity. A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

ethnicity. The shared national, ethnocultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not they live in their country of origin.

First Nation. A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word *Indian*, which many found offensive. The term *First Nation* has been adopted to replace the word "band" in the names of communities.

gender. A term that refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed. (*See also* ***sex*** *and* ***gender identity***.)

gender identity. A person's sense of self, with respect to being male or female. Gender identity is different from sexual orientation, and may be different from birth-assigned sex. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

harassment. A form of discrimination that may include unwelcome attention and remarks, jokes, threats, name-calling, touching, or other behaviour (including the display of pictures) that insults, offends, or demeans someone because of his or her identity. Harassment involves conduct or comments that are known to be, or should reasonably be known to be, offensive, inappropriate, intimidating, and hostile.

hate crime. A criminal offence, perpetrated on a person or property, that is motivated by bias or prejudice based on actual or perceived race, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other, similar factors. Hate crimes can involve intimidation, harassment, physical force, or threats of physical force against a person or an entire group to which the person belongs. (Any act, including an act of omission, that is not a criminal offence but otherwise shares the characteristics of a hate crime is referred to as a *hate incident*.)

hate propaganda. Ideas, beliefs, and ideologies transmitted in written, oral, or electronic form for the purpose of creating, promoting, perpetuating, or exacerbating antagonistic, hateful, and belligerent attitudes or actions against a particular group or groups of people.

homophobia. A disparaging or hostile attitude or a negative bias, which may be overt or unspoken and which may exist at an individual and/or a systemic level, towards people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT). (*See also* ***LGBT***.)

human rights. Rights that recognize the dignity and worth of every person, and provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other similar factors.

inclusive education. Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

intersectionality. The overlapping, in the context of an individual or group, of two or more prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code, or other, similar factors, which may result in additional biases or barriers to equity for that individual or group.

Inuit. Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act.

invisible minority. People who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may not be visible, such as a disability or sexual orientation. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

Islamophobia. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against Muslims or Arabs on the basis of their culture and religion. Islamophobia may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

LGBT. The initialism used to refer to *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual*, and *transgendered* people. A broader range of identities is also sometimes implied, or may be represented more explicitly by the initialism LGBTTIQ, which stands for *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual*, *transgendered*, *transsexual* or *two-spirited*, *intersexed*, and *queer* or *questioning*. (*See also* ***homophobia***.)

LGBTTIQ. See ***LGBT***.

Métis. People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe, and Cree.

minority group. A group of people within a given society that has little or no access to social, economic, political, cultural, or religious power. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position.

multicultural education. An approach to education, including administrative policies and procedures, curriculum, and learning activities, that recognizes the experience and contributions of diverse cultural groups. One of the aims of multicultural education is to promote the understanding of and respect for cultural and racial diversity.

Ontario Human Rights Code ("the Code"). A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in specific areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and ultimately prevent discrimination and harassment. (Available at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

power dynamics. The process by which one group defines and subordinates other groups and subjects them to differential and unequal treatment.

queer. A term for homosexuality that was once a pejorative but that has more recently been reclaimed by the LGBT movement and is now used for self-identification in a positive way.

race. A social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture, and/or facial features. The term is used to designate the social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. Race is often confused with ethnicity (a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background); there may be several ethnic groups within a racial group. (Refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

racialization. The process through which groups come to be seen as different, and may be subjected to differential and unequal treatment.

racialized group. A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of race, colour, and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment.

racism. A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

racist. A term referring to the beliefs and/or actions of an individual, institution, or organization that imply (directly or indirectly) that certain groups are inherently superior to others. It may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

religion. *See* ***creed***.

religious accommodation. An obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code to provide reasonable accommodation for students and employees who wish to observe the tenets or practices of their faith, as well as for those who wish *not* to participate in any form of religious observance. (*See also* ***accommodation***.)

sex. The category of male or female based on characteristics that are biologically determined. (*See also* ***gender*** and ***gender identity***.)

sexism. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people on the basis of their sex or gender. Sexism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

sexual orientation. A person's sense of sexual attraction to people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both sexes. (*See also* ***LGBTQ***, and refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation*, at www.ohrc.on.ca.)

social justice. A concept based on the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to equal opportunity, civil liberties, and full participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities of that society.

stereotype. A false or generalized, and usually negative, conception of a group of people that results in the unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences. Stereotyping may be based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors.

systemic discrimination. A pattern of discrimination that arises out of apparently neutral institutional policies or practices, that is reinforced by institutional structures and power dynamics, and that results in the differential and unequal treatment of members of certain groups.

visible minority. A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of factors that may be visible, such as race, colour, and ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment. The term may refer to a group that is small in number or it may connote inferior social position. (*See also* ***racialized group***.)

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